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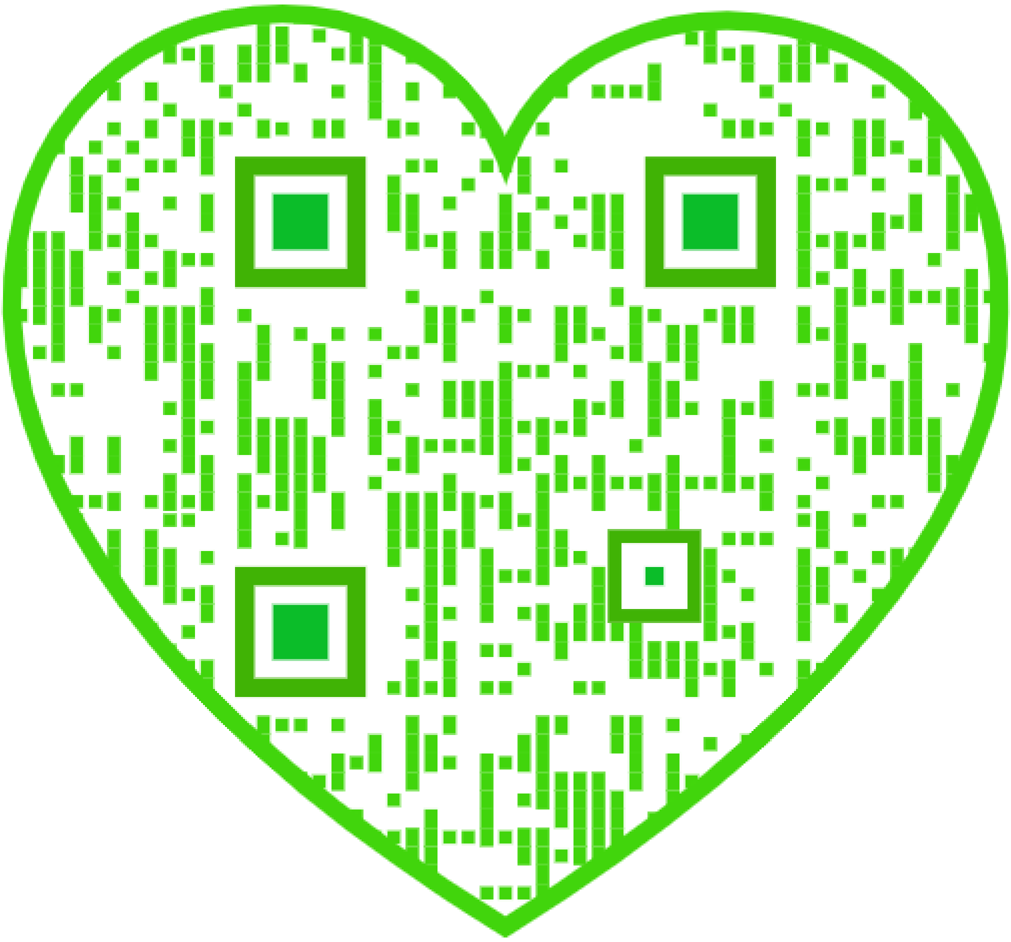

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this week in bella

JAIME RETURNS!

Soap icon Peggy is heading back to Albert Square

Two years after she stepped into the shoes of a young Peggy Mitchell for a flashback episode, Jaime Winstone is reprising her *EastEnders* role as part of Phil's ongoing mental health storyline. The actor, 39, will depict the iconic character (famously played by the late Barbara Windsor) in scenes where Phil experiences hallucinations from 1985, owing to symptoms of psychosis.

After describing her debut in the BBC soap as 'bookending her journey with Barbara', Jaime said of her upcoming performance, 'It was such an honour to be welcomed back to play Peggy Mitchell. To be able to contribute to this iconic family on this major storyline has been such a joyous and emotional journey and I truly hope I have done her justice. Thank you to all the *EastEnders* family, this has been such a wonderful experience.'

Alongside Jaime – who also portrayed Barbara for a BBC biopic, *Babs* – other members of the younger Mitchell clan will be making comebacks, including George Russo as Eric, Daniel Delaney portraying Phil, and Teddy Jay playing Grant, on the lead-up to the show's 40th anniversary week towards the end of February. *EastEnders* has ensured they are working closely with several mental health organisations, including The Samaritans and CALM, to ensure Phil's depression story is portrayed as accurately and as sensitively as possible.

P26
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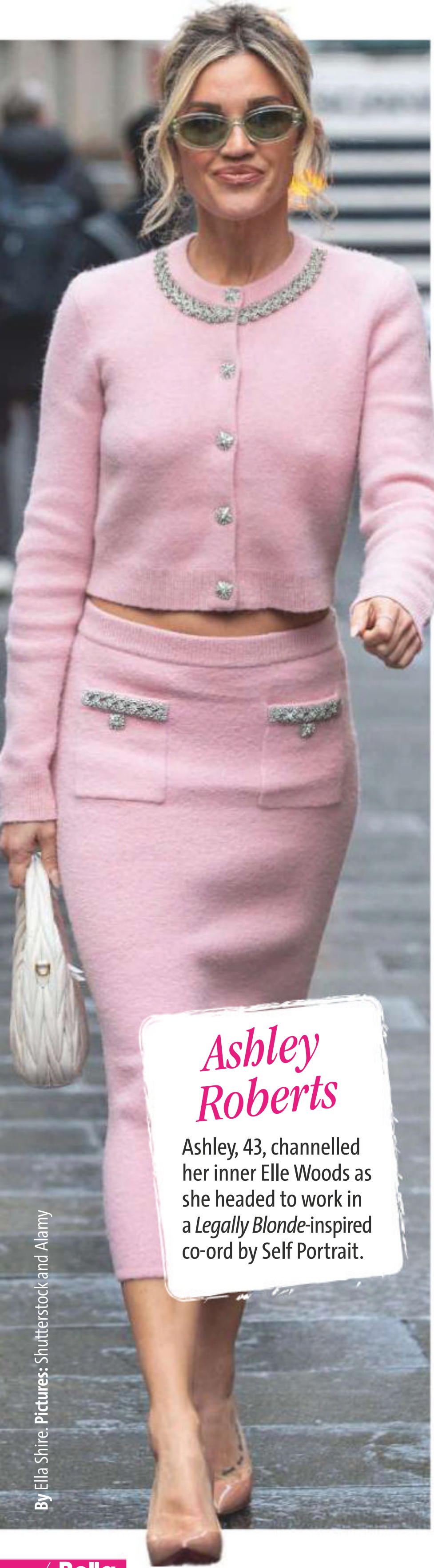
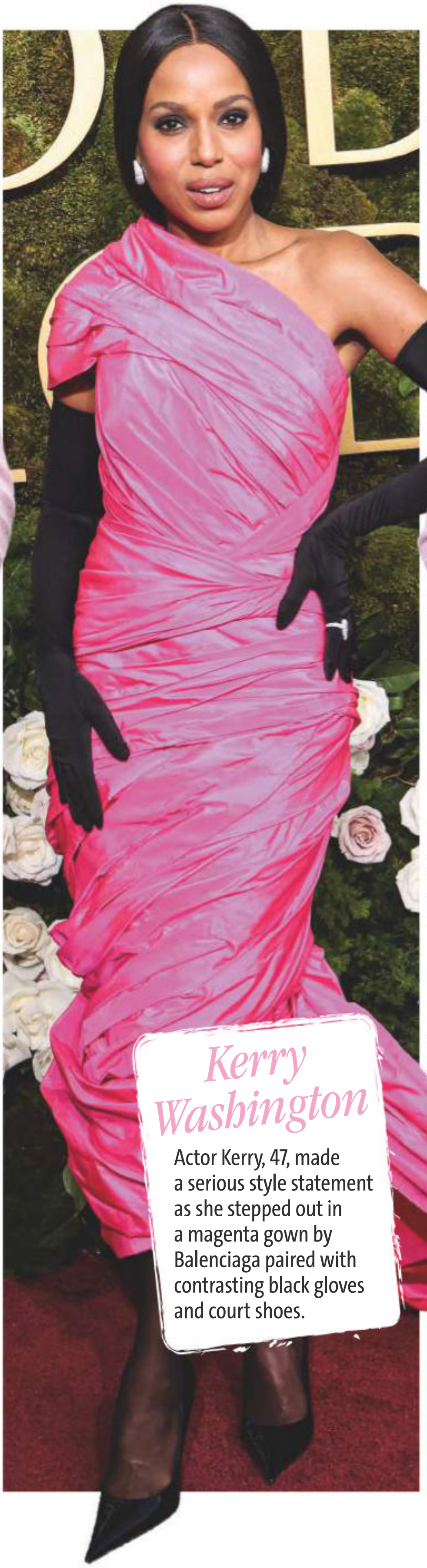
By Millie Payne. **Pictures** BBC **Cover pictures** splashnews.com, Instagram

Pink La



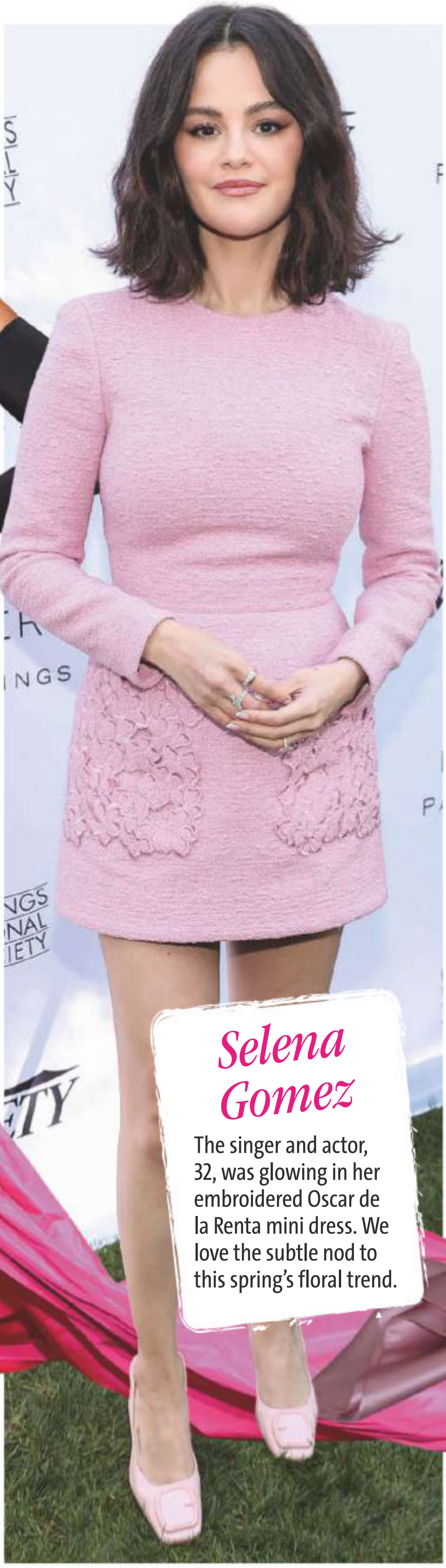
Ashley Roberts

Ashley, 43, channelled her inner Elle Woods as she headed to work in a *Legally Blonde*-inspired co-ord by Self Portrait.



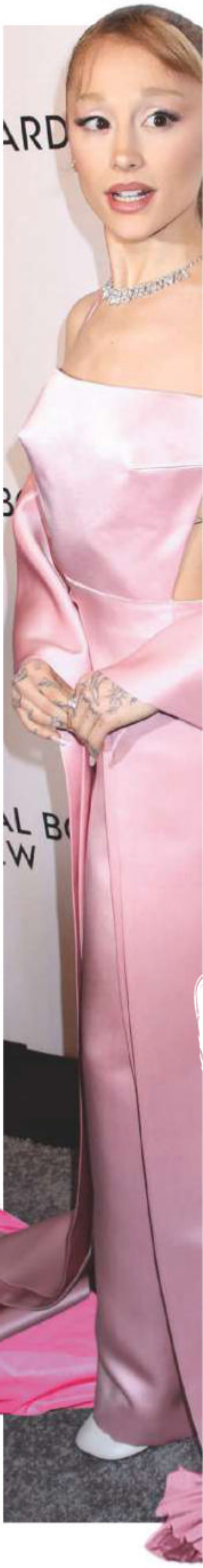
Kerry Washington

Actor Kerry, 47, made a serious style statement as she stepped out in a magenta gown by Balenciaga paired with contrasting black gloves and court shoes.



Selena Gomez

The singer and actor, 32, was glowing in her embroidered Oscar de la Renta mini dress. We love the subtle nod to this spring's floral trend.



By Ella Shire. **Pictures:** Shutterstock and Alamy

dies

These celebs are getting into the Valentine's spirit

Ariana Grande

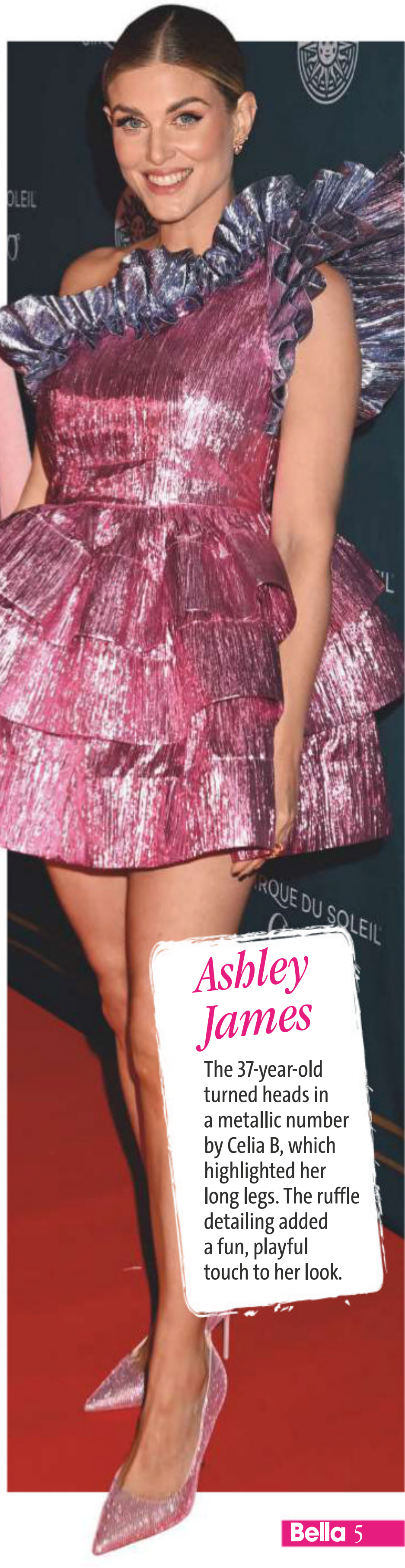
The *Wicked* press tour may be over, but Ariana, 31, is still channelling Glinda's signature style in a blush Loewe frock and shawl set.

Viola Davis

Award-winning actor Viola, 59, deserves recognition for this Dior silk pleated number. The caped sleeves and plunging neckline looked magnificent on the red carpet.

Amanda Holden

Proving that wearing head-to-toe colour can look chic, TV star Amanda, 53, wore a matching coat and dress for the *BGT* auditions in Blackpool.



Ashley James

The 37-year-old turned heads in a metallic number by Celia B, which highlighted her long legs. The ruffle detailing added a fun, playful touch to her look.

Exclusive

Holly's 'terrified' of PHIL'S REVENGE

Insiders say the presenter isn't underestimating her once closest confidante

After a traumatic 18 months which saw her sever ties with best friend Phillip Schofield, become the subject of a planned kidnap, rape and murder plot, and end her 14-year tenure at *This Morning*, Holly Willoughby has opened up for the first time.

Discussing the heinous plot that resulted in Gavin Plumb being sentenced to life imprisonment last July, Holly, 43, told *The Sunday Times*, 'It's been a tough one. There's no way of sugar-coating it.' The mum of three – who shares children Harry, 15, Belle, 13, and Chester, 10, with husband Dan Baldwin – added that 'nothing can prepare you' for something like that, and 'it's been 's**t for all of us'.

While Holly bravely reflected on her turmoil, she failed to mention her infamous falling out with Phillip, which came amid his admission of lying about an 'unwise but not illegal' affair with a younger ITV colleague in 2023.

Despite remaining tight-lipped about her former TV co-host, a source tells *Bella* that the presenter is worried Phillip – who appeared on reality show *Cast Away*, in which he discussed his issues – could still be out for revenge, especially as there have been whispers he's planning a tell-all memoir.

'While Holly is trying to put everything behind her and throw herself back into her career, the situation between her and Phillip still haunts her and it's something that she can't seem to escape or feel any kind of closure from,' the insider says. 'Holly's decision not to mention Phil in her interview was sparked by her deep fear of more revenge, but she is quietly terrified of ruffling his feathers after learning of his plans for a tell-all book. Not only that, but his Channel 5 show gave Holly a glimpse into how angry he still is – and how much resentment he harbours towards her.'

Phillip, 62, resigned from his roles at ITV amid his affair scandal. Both he and Holly vehemently denied that she knew anything about it, but it has since been claimed that he refers to her as 'the witch' who he blames for his fall from grace. Then, in scenes in *Cast Away*, the ex-TV veteran appeared to mock Holly's 'Are you OK?' speech on *This Morning*, which she delivered on her return to the show following Phillip's sensational exit.

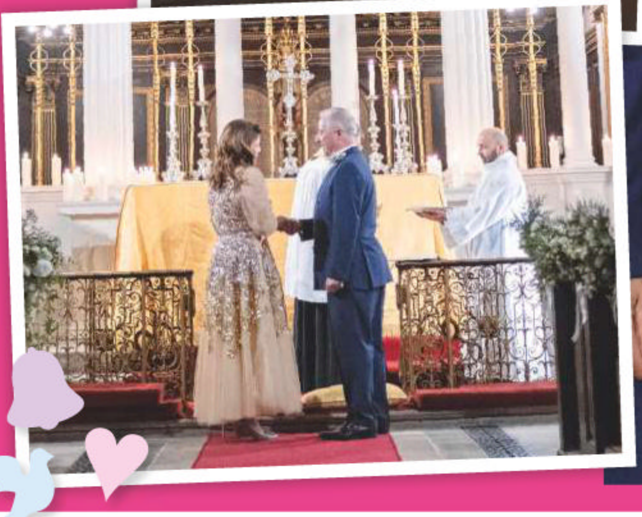
Now, an insider reveals that Holly is struggling to move on from it all.

The source says, 'Holly wanted to use her interview to at least try to end any animosity and send Phillip her best wishes, but she was terrified that anything she said could have been further twisted or used against her in any exposé. Some friends have suggested she reach out and meet with him face-to-face, but others fear that it could only make things worse, so she's torn over what to do.

'She's just hoping and praying that he'll show some remorse – especially after the hellish time she's been through – and use the book as an opportunity to show some grace and let bygones be bygones.'

KIRSTIE'S SECRET WEDDING

By Millie Payne. Pictures SPLASH, Instagram, Shutterstock, Catherine Bradley Photography, PA



After 21 years of being 'happily unmarried', Kirstie Allsopp and Ben Andersen have quietly tied the knot in front of loved ones. Sharing a beaming image from the nuptials, the *Location, Location, Location* presenter, 53, revealed it was a family tradition to wed at the Grosvenor Chapel in Mayfair. 'To marry in the same church that my parents and grandparents married was always my hope and luckily I already know that we did live happily ever after,' she wrote.

Kirstie and property developer Ben – who met in early 2004 and share sons Bay, 18, and Oscar, 16 – exchanged last-minute vows in a private ceremony in central London, which is also the same venue that Juliet (Keira Knightley) and Peter (Chiwetel Ejiofor) wed in *Love Actually*. The couple invited their 70 guests only three days prior, but misled them by saying it was for Ben's 64th birthday. 'Most of our guests thought that's what they were coming to celebrate, and we did just that, with lots of food, drink and dancing, and all my nephews and nieces running around, having a ball,' Kirstie said.

The Channel 4 host – who is also stepmum to Ben's sons Orion and Hal – wore a sequinned Oscar de La Renta gown that she bought on sale two weeks earlier.

Bella made a donation to The Grosvenor Chapel (grosvenorchapel.org.uk) at Kirstie's request.

WEEK IN PICS

Linda's heartbreak

Linda Robson, 66, has opened up about best friend Pauline Quirke's dementia battle, revealing that she's spent time with her 65-year-old *Birds Of A Feather* co-star in the years since her diagnosis. 'It breaks my heart to see her endure such a terrible illness,' she wrote.

A baby girl!

Princess Beatrice and husband Edoardo Mapelli Mozzi have welcomed their second daughter, naming her Athena. While she was born several weeks early – as Beatrice, 36, was due in the spring – a statement released by the Palace said she arrived 'safely'. Congratulations to them both!

Dens on hols!

Denise Welch showcased the results of her 2.5st weight loss by slipping into a striking swimming costume on holiday. The *Loose Woman* star, 66, revealed she and husband Lincoln Townley have been 'horizontal for pretty much two weeks' while they 'eat, sunbathe, scroll, read, nap, eat, sleep, repeat'. That sounds tough, Denise!

Exclusive

Eamonn's huge regret over Ruth

The star is struggling since their split

While he may be in the throes of a new romance, there are whispers that Eamonn Holmes is having second thoughts about how his marriage to Ruth Langsford ended. Sources claim that behind closed doors, Eamonn harbours some regrets over the split which, coupled with his increasing health woes, is taking a toll on him.

'Eamonn is not in a great place with his health. He's in a lot of pain and he's really struggling to get up and go to work every day. His demeanour has changed, he's not the happy, jolly guy from *This Morning* any more,' an insider tells *Bella*. 'It's making friends speculate that he's regretting his decisions, thinking the grass is greener when it never normally is.' They add, 'He'll never ever admit it but he left his lovely house and lovely life and now, underneath it all, he's probably thinking, "what the hell have I done?"'

With his new flame Katie Alexander

It hasn't been the easiest time for Eamonn as of late, with the 65-year-old presenter recently being branded the 'absolute worst' interviewer by American reality star Whitney Way Thore, amid his other worries.

In contrast, things are on the up for Ruth. Last week, the *Loose Women* star let her hair down as she enjoyed a night out with pals Rylan Clark and Lizzie Cundy at Little Italy restaurant in London's Soho. Ruth, 65, looked like she has moved on from her 14-year marriage and was having the time of her life as she danced and sang to Montell Jordan's hit *This Is How We Do It* and was all smiles when she posed for photos on the dance floor. 'Ruth is catching up on lost time,' the source says. 'To a degree she's numbing the pain of her divorce with late nights partying and loads of flirting. She is throwing herself into work and having fun and definitely has a new spring in her step.

'She has found herself and told pals she feels back to her best. She's coming out the other side of the pain of the split.' According to the insider, she has told pals, 'It's not about revenge, it's about me now. I am my own priority.'

'Ruth has a spring in her step'

Coleen Nolan, who has been divorced twice, revealed that Ruth has been handling her break-up well.

'She's been amazing. I really admire her, she's been so classy through the whole thing and just

A night out with close mate Lizzie Cundy

Posing for pics with Rylan, Lizzie and make-up artist Kimberley Morgan

got on with it,' she said. 'She's also had such a glow-up. She looks better than I think I've seen her in years, she looks like she's lost 10 years. Not that she didn't look great before, but now she looks fabulous and she's working really hard and she's just getting on with it.'

FEELING FabULOUS
WITH RUTH LANGSFORD
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
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Ruth's Feeling Fabulous event has been a big hit

Ruth and Eamonn shocked their fans last May when they announced they were splitting after 28 years together, 14 of them married, after she reportedly found messages from him to another woman. Within a month of the break-up, Eamonn was linked to 43-year-old marriage counsellor Katie Alexander, whom he first exchanged messages with on social media 12 years ago. Their relationship got serious quite quickly as they went on a Mediterranean cruise together in September before making their red-carpet debut as a couple at the TRIC Awards in November. In December, he travelled to Yorkshire to spend his first Christmas together with the mother-of-three.

'Eamonn headed to Katie's home for Christmas to show just how loved-up he really is. It was a four-and-a-half-hour drive from his bachelor pad in London,' a source told *The Sun*. 'He's met Katie's two younger children before, but turning up at their home was still nerve-racking.'

While his relationship with Katie seems to be getting more serious, with the pair yet to move in together, it's thought that Eamonn may be putting the reins on their public displays of affection amid suggestions that his children expressed their concerns. He shares 22-year-old son Jack with Ruth and is dad to sons Declan and Niall and daughter Rebecca with first his wife, Gabrielle.

'At the moment Katie drives from her family home every Thursday and stays with Eamonn until Monday. They're still house hunting. But he has taken a step back with Katie,' the insider tells us.

'Eamonn's taken a step back'

Relations between the exes appear to be amicable as they both continue to wear their wedding rings in public. Ruth has also been liking her estranged husband's social media posts. 'For Ruth, Eamonn wants the divorce to go through as quickly as possible,' the source says. 'But neither are taking off their rings, both refusing to be the first person. Ruth is also enjoying winding him up by liking all his posts.'

Eamonn recently shared a video with their beloved rescue dog Maggie licking his ear, amid reports of a 'bitter' custody battle over the pooch. 'All you need is Love… And a rescue dog!' he wrote alongside the clip.

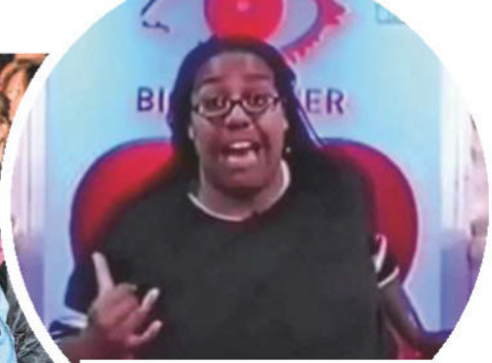
But the insider reveals, 'Ruth couldn't believe it when he posted the video of Maggie. It was an old video, he hasn't seen the dog in months.' The drama continues…

By Shereen Low. **Pictures** w8media, PA, Instagram, splashnews.com, Shutterstock

Happy 50t

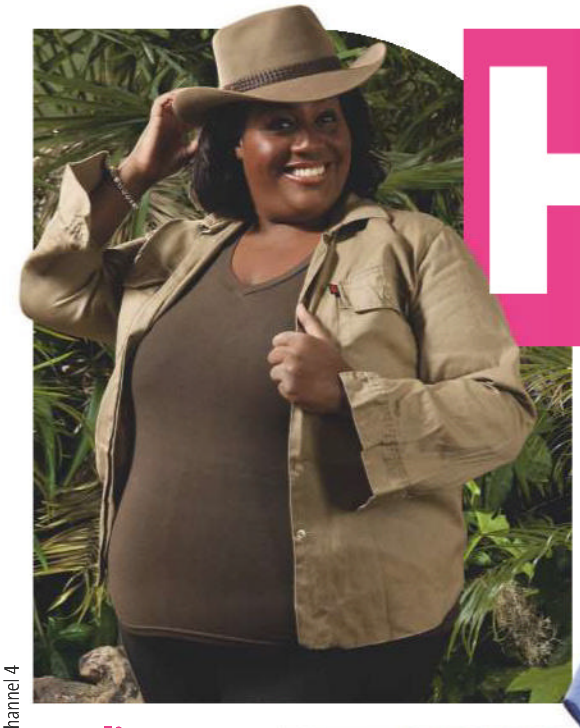
A star is born

Born to a single mother on 5 February 1975, Alison was raised in a council house in the Birmingham suburbs. Her mother, Maria, quickly discovered that Alison's father, Clifford, was already married with children, but he kept contact with Alison up until his death in 2020. Alison said, 'My dad would arrive periodically, show his face, and go back to Jamaica.' She added, 'It didn't bother me because I had my mum.'



Big Brother

Alison's big break came in 2002 when she entered the *Big Brother* house alongside future stars like Jade Goody and Kate Lawler. When she applied, she was £4000 in debt and enticed by the £70,000 prize. Although she was the second contestant to be evicted, she made a lasting impression on audiences. She later admitted, 'I was absolutely devastated at the time. I was enjoying myself and was really upset when I had to leave.'



Reality star

As well as regularly appearing on *This Morning*, Alison has also featured on several reality shows over the years. In 2010, she competed on *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!* where she finished in 10th place. She then appeared on *Strictly Come Dancing*, where she once again finished 10th, and *Celebrity MasterChef* – a true jack of all trades!

This Morning part deux

In 2020, Alison became a regular host on *This Morning* and began appearing alongside Dermot O'Leary every Friday. After Holly Willoughby and Phillip Schofield left, Alison was given even more airtime, much to the delight of viewers. She has now interviewed countless stars, including Harrison Ford, Ryan Gosling and Hugh Jackman to name a few.

Bake Off

Last year Alison began hosting *The Great British Bake Off* alongside Noel Fielding, a coupling she describes as 'a seamless, beautiful partnership that just kind of works.' A producer on the show praised Alison's energy, saying, 'Sometimes the crew is a bit tired and Alison will walk in and bring everyone up.'

By Sarah O'Byrne. **Pictures** Instagram, YouTube, Shutterstock, Alamy, Channel 4

Presenting career

Although she only lasted 15 days in the *Big Brother* house, opportunity came knocking. A few months after leaving the show, producers at *This Morning* invited Alison to present a regular diet segment on the show. Soon after, she was invited to interview George Clooney, which kickstarted her interviewing career.

Motherhood

Alison became a mum on her 30th birthday in 2005 when she and then-fiancé Noureddine Boufaied welcomed their son, Aidan. Although she split from Noureddine in 2014 after nine years together, the pair remain friends and co-parents to Aidan. She has previously opened up about how grateful she is to her ex and refers to him as 'a lovely man with a beautiful smile.'

We look back at the *This Morning* star's incredible life

th Alison!

Toyboy

In April 2024, Alison revealed that she was in a relationship with Russian model and masseur David Putnam, who she met when booking his services for a massage therapy session. Although some haters have balked at the couple's 22-year age gap, Alison has said that the pair fit together like a 'jigsaw.' 'I can see how, on paper, you'd notice the age difference. But if you saw us together, you'd understand.'

A well-deserved break

2025 looks set to be Alison's best year yet. Although her career has been on fire – and she's reportedly now worth between £1m and £4m – Alison wants the next 12 months to be full of travel, friends and family. She revealed on *This Morning*, 'I want a little bit more time off this year, I've been very busy. And a trip to Japan!'

Exclusive

'I've lost weight – but STILL drink wine & eat chocolate!'

Dragons' Den star Sara Davies MBE talks work/life balance and her health overhaul

While most of us like to ease ourselves back into work in January, *Dragons' Den* star Sara Davies is already rushed off her feet.

This month has been one of her busiest yet, as she's juggled both the latest *Dragons' Den* series (currently airing on BBC1) and a brand-new show, *The Big Idea Works*, which is set to air next month.

Her new book, *The Six Minute Entrepreneur*, has just hit bookshelves, too. On top of that, she has stepped back in as CEO of Crafter's Companion, the multimillion-pound enterprise she began from her university bedroom, after hearing it was set to be placed into administration.

'It was a wake-up call'

But when she sits down to chat with us, she looks fresh faced and stress-free, and admits that the recent lifestyle changes, inspired by the late Michael Mosley, whose legacy of diet plans include The Fast 800 and The 5:2 diet, has seen her drop from a size 16 to a size 12. But more importantly, she's full of energy now. Here, Sara – who lives in Teesside with her husband of 18 years, Simon, and their two sons, Charlie, 10, and Oliver, seven – sits down for a candid chat about it all…

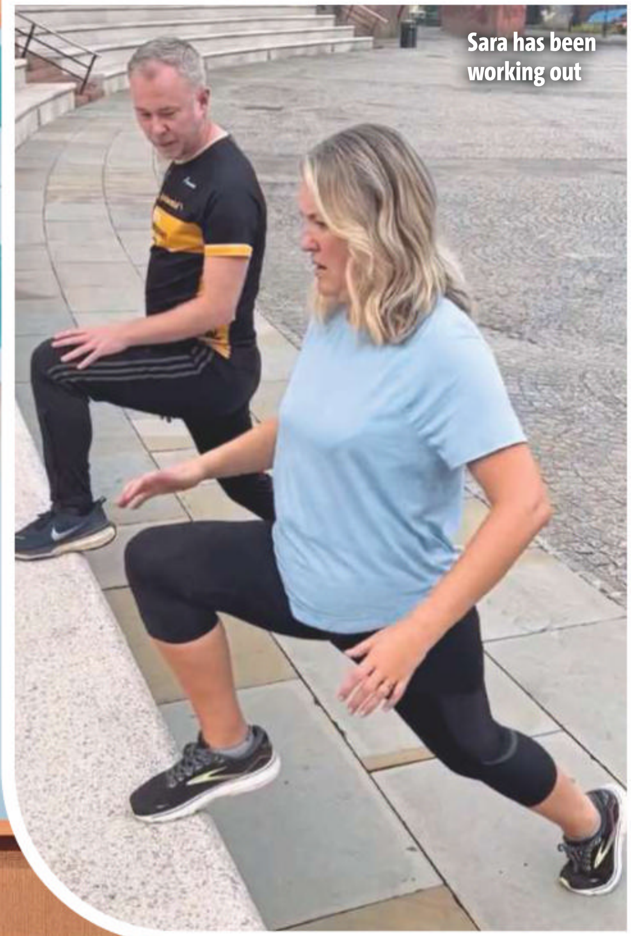
Family keeps Sara grounded

On *Dragons' Den*

Sara, your workload sounds full-on – is it hard to find balance?
I've had a mega busy time of it, but I've always been great at balancing. I worked all hours Monday to Friday this week, but then I took five kids to see *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* on Saturday and spent Sunday morning in the soft play! Weekends are always my time with my boys and Simon.

Is your husband a great support?
We've always worked together and I trust him implicitly. He also does a brilliant job of keeping my feet firmly on the ground.

Do your kids watch you on TV?
They do, but they've got zero appreciation! When I first went on



Sara has been working out

Dragons' Den, they were really excited. But at the screening party, my eldest – who was five at the time – came up to me afterwards and said, 'Well, that wasn't what you said it was going to be, Mummy. I thought you were a dragon.' He was obviously thinking I was going to be dressed up as a dragon! I was a huge disappointment.

You look phenomenal. What has been your motivation?

I turned 40 last year, and I had my eldest when I was about to turn 30 – during that pregnancy, and then with my second pregnancy too, I had gestational diabetes. The doctor told me I must get my BMI under 30 and get control of my weight, and if I didn't, I would develop type two diabetes within 10 years. The 10-year mark was looming, and then I went for my annual diabetes check and I was right on the borderline. It was a wake-up call.

You cut out sugar, didn't you?

Yes, and I lost quite a bit of weight. But actually, I haven't lost anything recently. I've been going running a lot and even doing a little bit of weight training. So I'm a lot fitter, but the muscle weighs more than the fat. I haven't been focused on losing weight, though, because I was always happy with how I looked. It was never about that.

Are you on a specific diet?

I follow Michael Mosley's diet plans, because a lot of his are about reversing type two diabetes, and I've made a point of cutting down on sugar. But I haven't cut it completely – I drank a lot of wine this weekend and I ate chocolate cake. I'm only human.

Tell us about your new show, *The Big Idea Works*...

It helps bring people's brilliant ideas to life by a team of the country's best craftspeople. The BBC came to me with it because they thought it was very 'me'. They knew that I'd started my business by inventing a product that could create envelopes for handmade cards – my dad's an engineer and he built the prototype. The concept of *The Big Idea Works* is that most people don't have a dad who's an engineer, and so my team of engineers will work out how we're going to create it.

> 'The Den got a bit fiery!'

What kind of entrepreneurs are on *Dragons' Den* this year?

We've had a right old mix. But what's interesting is that, in times of economic challenge, like at the moment, it really does sort the wheat from the chaff. We've had guest Dragons in the den as well this time, so it's got a bit fiery, there's a lot more competition!

What's next for you? Is 2025 shaping up to be a busy year?

I'm keen to try different things. I've been presenting on *Morning Live*, which is different, and that's helped me hone my skills. And I'd love for *The Big Idea Works* to get recommissioned – I'm proud of it and that would bring me so much happiness! So fingers crossed. I'm looking forward to pushing myself and taking on new challenges in 2025.

By Kirsty Nutkins, **Pictures** BBC, PA, Instagram

SOUTHPORT MURDERS

Grieving parents: ‘Living without Alice is not living at all…’

Alice

Bella reports on the unimaginable tragedy that unfolded at a dance class last summer…

On 23 January, the brave families of the three little girls who were murdered in a dance studio in Southport sat in court as their killer, Axel Rudakubana, was handed a life sentence with a minimum term of 52 years. For the families who lost their children, no sentence would ever be enough. The mother of Elsie Dot Stancombe, who was just seven when she was killed, called him ‘cruel and pure evil’ and the act of a ‘coward’, adding, ‘You know what you have done and we hope the weight of that knowledge haunts you every day.’

It was on 29 July last year, at the start of the school holidays, when 26 girls gathered for a Taylor Swift-themed dance and bracelet-making workshop. The sold-out event, held at The Hart Space in the coastal town of Southport, Lancashire, was a celebration of music, creativity and friendship. Guided by yoga teacher Leanne Lucas and her friend and colleague Heidi Liddle, it was a beautiful summer’s morning. But it soon turned into a nightmare that would change the small town forever.

Police escorting the murderer to court

At 11:10am, Axel Rudakubana, then 17, left his home in Banks and took a taxi to the venue just over four miles away. Wearing a green hoodie and face mask, the teenager appeared eerily calm. Upon arriving, he asked the driver the exact location of the studio, then exited the taxi without paying and approached the building. At 11:45am, Rudakubana entered the studio where the children were gathered around tables making friendship bracelets.

Without saying a word, he pulled out a 20cm knife and began a frenzied attack. Grabbing the girl closest to him, he began stabbing her before moving across the room, targeting more children. Leanne initially thought he had come to collect a child, and she only realised the horrifying reality when he stabbed her in the back. People passing by could hear children screaming and several ran out of the building. The court were shown CCTV footage of Rudakubana dragging a girl back inside the building before she staggered out and collapsed. People in the public gallery were visibly shaken at the footage.

‘People were shaken’

Despite her injuries, Leanne called 999 while shouting at the children to ‘run away, run away’.

Meanwhile, Heidi, who had been helping the children make bracelets, tried to pull Leanne away and then started pushing the children towards the exit. One girl fled to a toilet on the landing, and Heidi followed, locking them both inside. Both terrified, Heidi told the child to remain silent. As Heidi heard crying children shouting ‘stop!’, she realised not all of the girls had managed to escape.

At 11:49am, police arrived to a scene of horror. Body-cam footage captured officers entering the bloodstained building. Rudakubana was found standing over a young girl’s body. He dropped the knife when ordered

Elsie

Bebe

to do so and the officers tackled him to the floor. Three children – Alice da Silva Aguiar, nine, Bebe King, six, and Elsie Dot Stancombe, seven – died from their injuries. Eight other children were injured, including one child who will need to be on antibiotics for the rest of her life after having her spleen removed. Leanne and local businessman John Hayes, who had bravely intervened, were also stabbed.

‘You looked possessed’

Rudakubana was arrested on suspicion of murder and attempted murder. Following his arrest, a search of Rudakubana’s home revealed disturbing evidence. Police found a knife identical to the one used in the attack, purchased on Amazon along with other weapons. He had also manufactured the deadly poison ricin in his bedroom – enough to kill 12,000 people. Investigators discovered documents about war, genocide, and an Al-Qaeda training manual. Yet despite this evidence, the attack was not classed as a terrorist incident because Rudakubana lacked a clear political or religious motive.

On 20 January, as his trial was about to begin at Liverpool Crown Court, Rudakubana, now 18, pleaded guilty to the murders of Alice, Bebe and Elsie, as well as 10 counts of attempted murder. He also pleaded guilty to possession of a knife, producing ricin and possessing extremist materials.

At his sentencing on 23 January, graphic details of the attack were revealed for the first time. CCTV footage played in court showed the chaos inside The Hart Space as children fled in terror. Families of the victims wept in the public gallery as footage showed three of the girls staggering into the street and collapsing – including two of the survivors and Alice da Silva Aguiar. Unlike Bebe King and Elsie Dot Stancombe, Alice had managed to get out of the building despite her grave injuries, but collapsed by the car of a woman who had arrived to pick up her daughter.

One survivor, referred to as Child A, had been pulled back inside the studio by Rudakubana as she tried to escape. Her mother’s statement, read by Prosecutor Deanna Heer KC, said, ‘Our daughter has not only experienced the most violent, frenzied attack on her body, but she’s witnessed so much horror too.’ The court heard how Rudakubana gloated after his arrest, saying, ‘It’s a good thing those children are dead. I’m so glad, I’m so happy.’

Throughout the hearing, Rudakubana kept disrupting proceedings, claiming he felt unwell and needed medical attention, despite being deemed fit to attend. A voice from the public gallery called him a ‘coward’ as he left the dock. As proceedings continued, several statements were read out in court from survivors and victims’ families. Among them was a 14-year-old girl, who appeared via video link and addressed Rudakubana directly. She said, ‘The thing I remember most about you is your eyes. You looked possessed and you didn’t look human. I knew I was running for my life… I knew from your eyes you wanted to kill us all.’

Leanne, who was stabbed, told the court that she can’t stay in her own home alone, go to work, or walk down the street without ‘holding her breath’ as she bypasses a person and then glances back to see if they’ve attempted to stab her. She said she ‘can’t give myself compassion or accept praise, as how can I live knowing I survived when children died’. The father of one of the girls

Leanne Lucas

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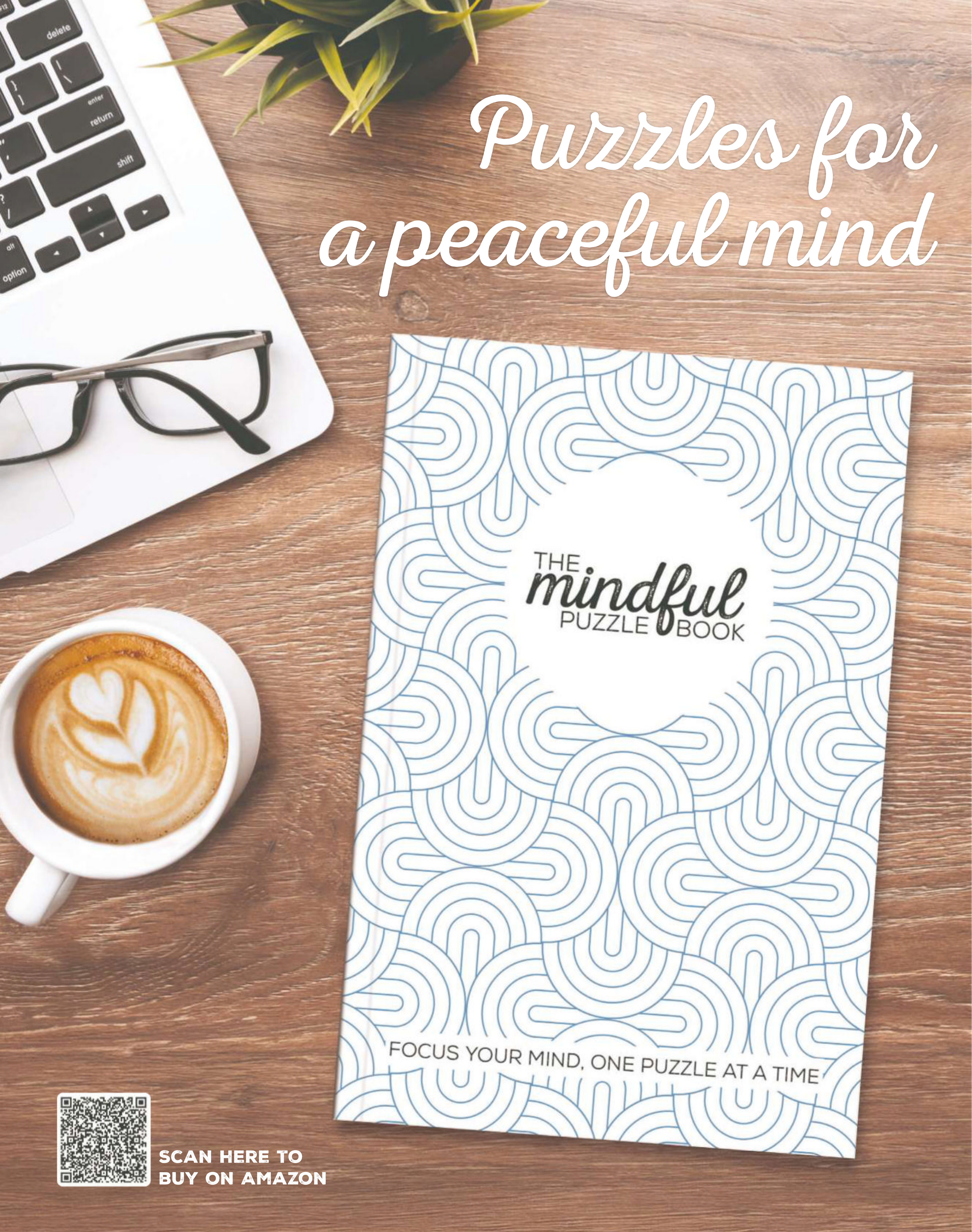

Puzzles for
a peaceful mind
THE
mindful
PUZZLE BOOK
FOCUS YOUR MIND, ONE PUZZLE AT A TIME
SCAN HERE TO
BUY ON AMAZON

Tributes at the scene

injured in the attack said that when he asked his daughter if she wishes she wasn't at the event that day, she said, 'In some ways, I wish I wasn't, but also, if I wasn't there, someone else would have been stabbed and they could have died, so I'm glad I might have stopped someone else getting hurt.' He added, 'These are not the words that any little girl, who just liked yoga and making bracelets, should ever need to say.'

In a statement read out by the prosecution on her behalf, Elsie's mother, Jenni Stancombe, said, 'He took our daughter, her life, her future and everything she could have been. There is no greater loss and no greater pain. His actions have left us with a lifetime of grief and it is only right that he faces the same.' Alice's parents, Alexandra and Sergio Aguiar, wrote, 'A pin drop that changed our lives forever. Living without Alice is not living at all. It's a state of permanent numbness.' Bebe's family requested their statements be read privately by the judge.

> 'Love will always win'

Rudakubana refused to return to court for his sentencing. In his absence, Mr Justice Goose handed him a life sentence with a minimum term of 52 years. He said that Rudakubana will likely spend the rest of his life in jail. Rudakubana turned 18 shortly after he carried out the knife attack but he was 17 when committing the crimes. According to the updated law, a whole life term can only be imposed if the offender was aged 18 or over when the offence was committed. He will not have a guarantee of ever being set free. Anyone on a life sentence must prove to the parole board that it is safe for them to be released before it is approved. After the sentencing, Chief Constable Serena Kennedy, from Merseyside Police, said the Southport attack is 'the most harrowing and large-scale' the force has ever dealt with and Detective Chief Constable Jason Pye described Rudakubana as 'obsessed with violence' and that he was intent to 'commit mass murder'.

Axel Rudakubana

For the families of the victims, how long Rudakubana will serve is just the first of many questions that need answers about that dreadful day. Now a public inquiry is set to examine 'missed opportunities' to identify Rudakubana's murderous intentions before the attack. It's emerged that he had been referred to the Government's anti-extremism programme, Prevent, three times for his fixation on violence. Despite reports to multiple authorities – including in 2019 when he brought a knife to school and attacked a fellow student with a hockey stick – there was only ever limited intervention. Just before sentencing, Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer announced people trying to buy knives online will face tougher measures to prove their age as the fallout from the attack continues.

Now, the small town of Southport is still picking up the pieces from an atrocity that has left an indelible mark. Residents say that the town has 'changed forever' and that they still 'grieve greatly'. The community came together, holding peaceful vigils and raising tens of thousands of pounds to support the victims and their families. Six months on, that unity and compassion continues – inspired by the shining legacy of Alice, Elsie and Bebe. Their memory will forever remain in Southport's heart, proving that love will always win over hate.

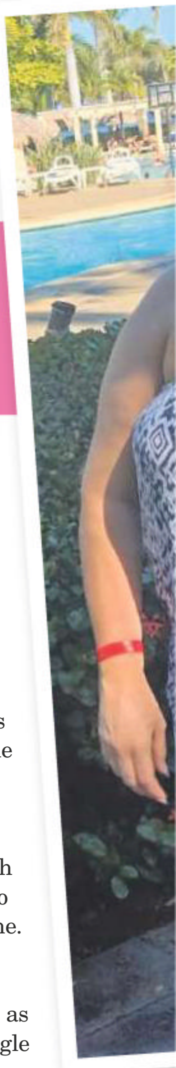
The Southport community has come together since the attack

A picture of Elsie at the vigil

By Elaine Hayward and Amy Rowland **Pictures:** Shutterstock

'Being humiliated o trip of a lifetime he me lose 4 stone'

After an upsetting incident in Costa Rica, Erica Timewell, 52, decided something had to change



Walking into the living room, I saw two things I loved laid out before me. The first was my husband, Michael, sprawled on the sofa and selecting us a film on the TV. The other was an array of nuts, crisps, dips, biscuits and a bottle of wine. 'Bliss,' I thought before sitting down for the evening. While Michael and I had met in our 40s online, my love affair with food was lifelong. In my teens and 20s, I'd considered a portion of takeaway egg fried rice a snack between meals, yet stayed an effortless size 8 to 10. But with the births of my daughters, now 17 and 25, I'd piled on weight. Though my youngest only weighed 4.5lb at birth, I'd gained five stone while expecting her. When she was a few months old, I started dieting but would just yo-yo up and down.

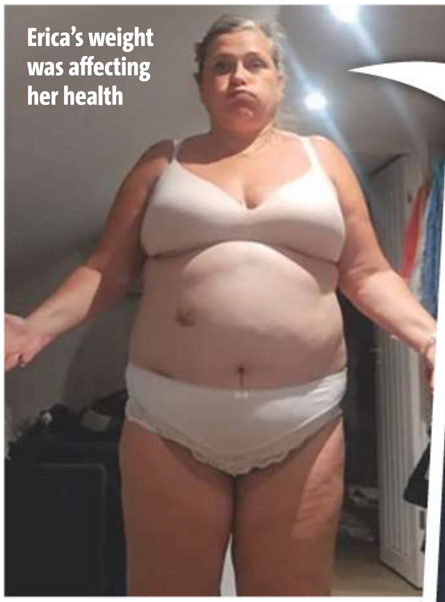
I'd been a size 14 at 5ft 4in when I met Michael, but happiness brought snacking, drinking, huge dinners and plenty of excess weight. The menopause hit, which meant I put on more weight, and, during the pandemic, there was nothing to do other than eat and drink. My days were powered by several sugary lattes and we'd split a family-sized lasagne for six between the two of us at dinnertime. Most nights saw us snacking in front of the telly and weekends brought the addition of wine.

It was fine for Michael though, who was 6ft 4in, ex-military and super fit. While he loved the gym, I avoided it at all costs.

Unsurprisingly, Michael stayed trim while I ballooned. I'd always loved fashion but, hitting a size 22, I took to buying elaborate accessories and had an array of 50 stylish oversized shawls, convinced they distracted people from how big I'd got. I woke up each morning and pulled on a pair of Spanx, sucking in my growing tummy with the huge restrictive granny pants. I carried all my weight on my middle, which made me feel 80 rather than in my late 40s.

I'd had mild asthma for a long time but, in December 2021, I suffered a severe asthma attack and Michael called an ambulance. Rushed to hospital, I knew my weight wasn't helping. By then I was so big that I had to stop for breath when climbing the slope outside our Torbay home. I'd planned to diet before a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Costa Rica for my 50th birthday the following month, but found a million excuses not to start it. When the holiday arrived, I was as overweight as ever and felt frumpy in a tankini. Too big to reach my toes, Michael had to paint my toenails for me. I'd always dreamed of seeing the country's sloths and was thrilled as we headed into the jungle for a trek. 'You won't be fit enough for the next section,' the guide said bluntly, indicating for me to stand with the elderly tourists and not cross a rickety jungle bridge. Poor Michael had to stay back with me, and I was mortified.

That night over dinner, I told him how unhappy I was. Michael made it clear that he loved me at any size but wanted a long life together and could see my health was suffering. As soon as we got home, I contacted a woman called Lauren Smith who I'd seen on



Erica's weight was affecting her health

She now feels great

n my
lped

BEFORE:
16st 6lb
Size 22

AFTER:
12st
Size 14

social media discussing The 1:1 diet by Cambridge Weight Plan. I was sceptical of yet another diet and refused to attend shaming group weigh-in sessions, but Lauren explained we could meet virtually, and she'd visit to give me my products and track my progress. I signed up and started the plan in February 2022 when I weighed 16st 6lb.

I was told I'd eat three meal replacement products a day and one 200-calorie meal. It was 800 calories in total, a far cry from what I had been consuming. But once I'd endured the first, tough week I knew I could do anything, especially after losing 8lb. My mantra was progress not perfection. If I didn't lose weight one week, I'd console myself by measuring my arms, thighs, and tummy, delighting in the inches falling away. Lauren brought round sacks that weighed what I'd lost, spurring me on.

Soon I had more energy, started going for long walks and could climb the slope to our house without losing my breath. In June 2022, after five months on the plan, I hit my target weight of 11st 7lb. I was able to ditch the big pants and sold all my shawls and bigger clothes on Vinted, buying a whole new size 14 wardrobe with the proceeds.

I worked my way up through the plan's steps, incorporating regular food and being mindful of my portion sizes. I drank water all day long, stopped snacking and pretty much cut out my beloved milky lattes. I saved alcohol for special occasions and bulked my meals out with vegetables.

I'm now maintaining a weight of 12st. Michael is incredibly proud of me, but I'm proud of myself too. I have so much more energy, am happier and haven't had a single asthma attack in the last three years. I felt like an old woman, but I know now that I've got so much life to live.

DIET BEFORE

BREAKFAST: Porridge with Nutella
LUNCH: Ham and cheese toastie, with crisps
DINNER: Half a family-sized lasagne with garlic bread or a jacket potato
DRINKS: Wine, several lattes
SNACKS: Crisps, nuts and biscuits

DIET AFTER

BREAKFAST: Porridge with blueberries and tea
LUNCH: Egg and salad protein wrap and grapes
DINNER: Chicken or fish or seafood, with lots of cauliflower and broccoli – followed by protein mousse or low-fat yogurt for pudding
DRINKS: 3l of water a day, an occasional skinny latte

By Miyo Padi and Matt Barbour

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Blouse, XS-XL, Reserved, £25.99

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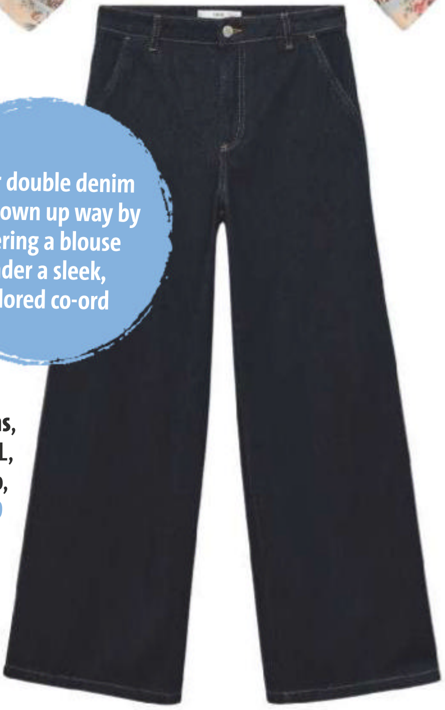
Bag, Katie Loxton, £44.99



Jeans, XS-L, Mango, £49.99

Shoes, Bershka, £29.99

Make your trusty shirt dress work on the weekend by pairing with trainers and a cosy knit

Dress To Impress

Dress, 6-20, £79; **Boots**, £155, both Sosandar

Continued over the page...

Colour Coded

Dress, XS-XL, Xara, £35.99

Earrings, H&M, £15.99

Keep things feeling chic by pairing your denim with muted, neutral tones

Coat, 6-22, F&F at Tesco, £45

Bag, Stradivarius, £39.99

Boots, very.co.uk, £45

One-piece Wonder

Earrings, Bohomoon, £20

Jumper, 8-24, Cotton Traders, £16

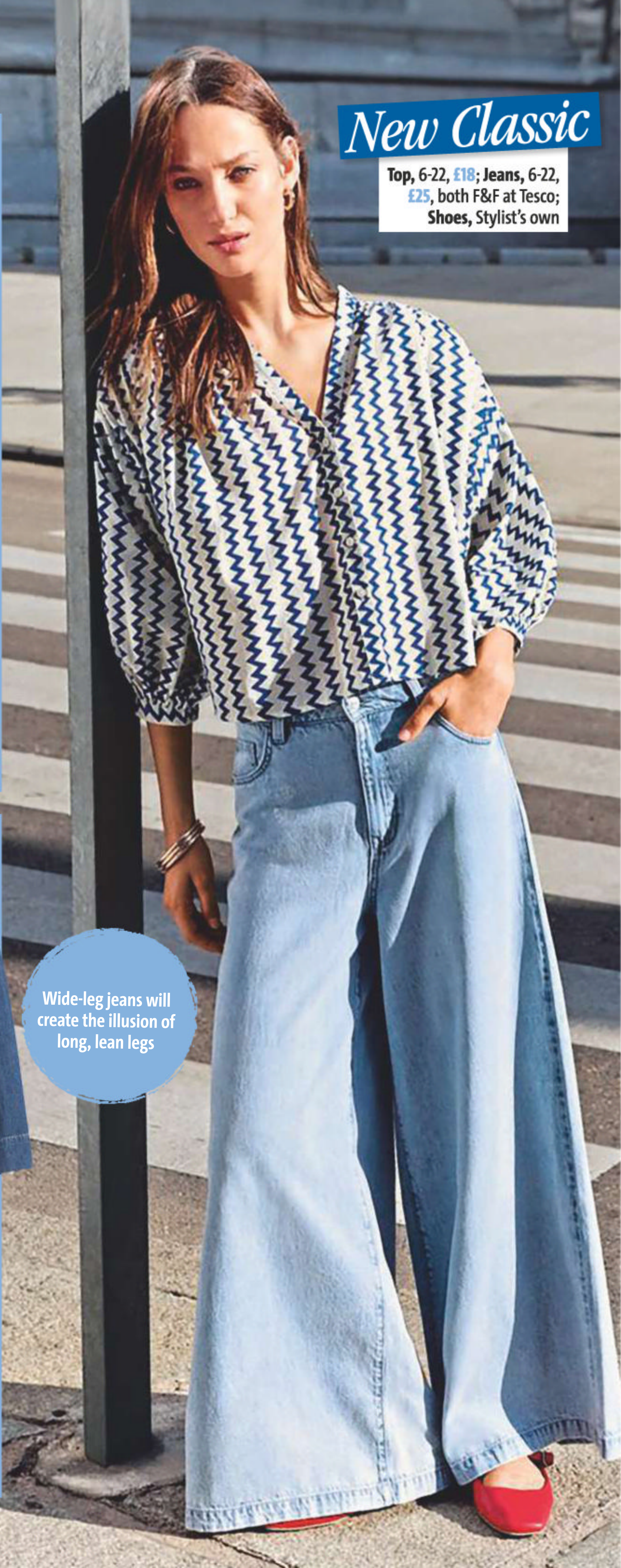
Jumpsuit, XS-XXL, H&M, £44.99

Take the effort out of outfit-building with a trendy boilersuit

Bag, River Island, £30

Shoes, Quiz, £29.99

New Classic



Top, 6-22, £18; **Jeans**, 6-22, £25, both F&F at Tesco; **Shoes**, Stylist's own

Wide-leg jeans will create the illusion of long, lean legs

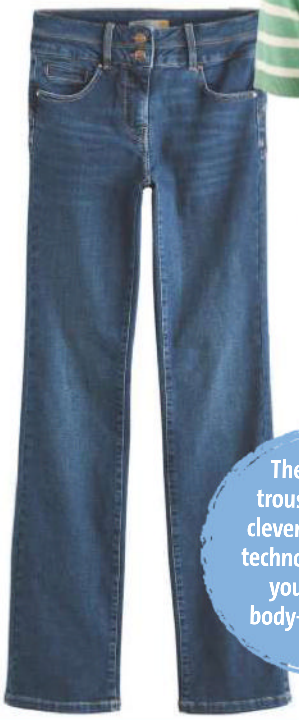
Compiled by: Cigdem Tanrioglu

Define your waistline by opting for a belted jacket

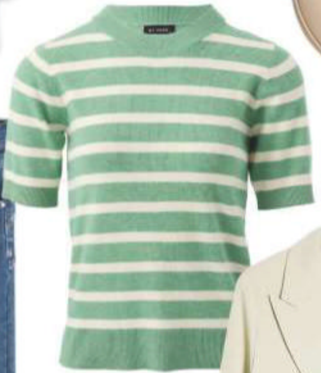
Cover Star

Jacket, 6-22, £42; **Jumper**, 6-22, £40; **Jeans**, 6-22, £45, all Next

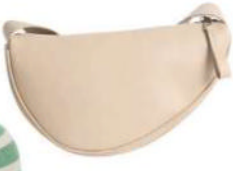
Sculpting Saviour



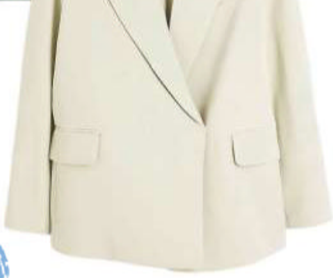
Jeans, 6-22, Next, £48



Top, 8-24, Matalan, £16

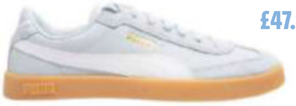


Bag, Marks & Spencer, £25



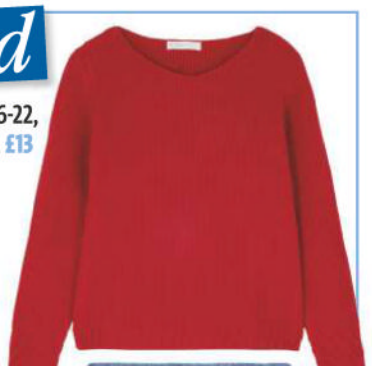
Blazer, 6-18, River Island, £69

These classic trousers feature clever shapewear technology to give you an extra body-confidence boost

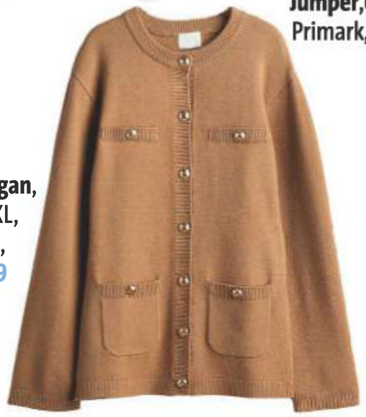


Trainers, Puma at Deichmann, £47.99

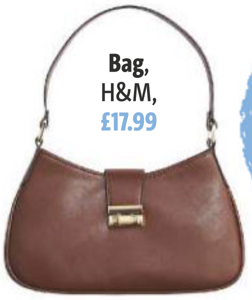
Skirting Around



Jumper,6-22, Primark, £13

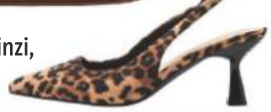


Cardigan, XS-XXL, H&M, £37.99

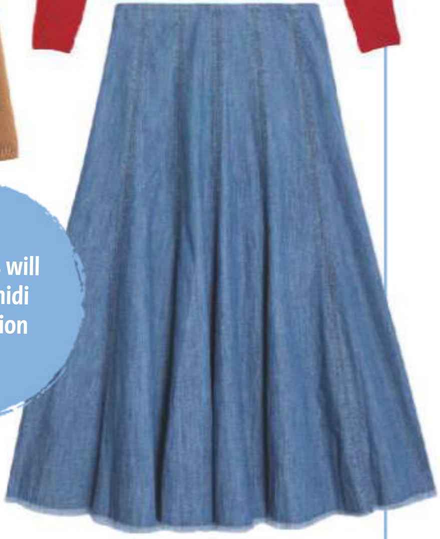


Bag, H&M, £17.99

Pleat details will give your midi a high-fashion finish

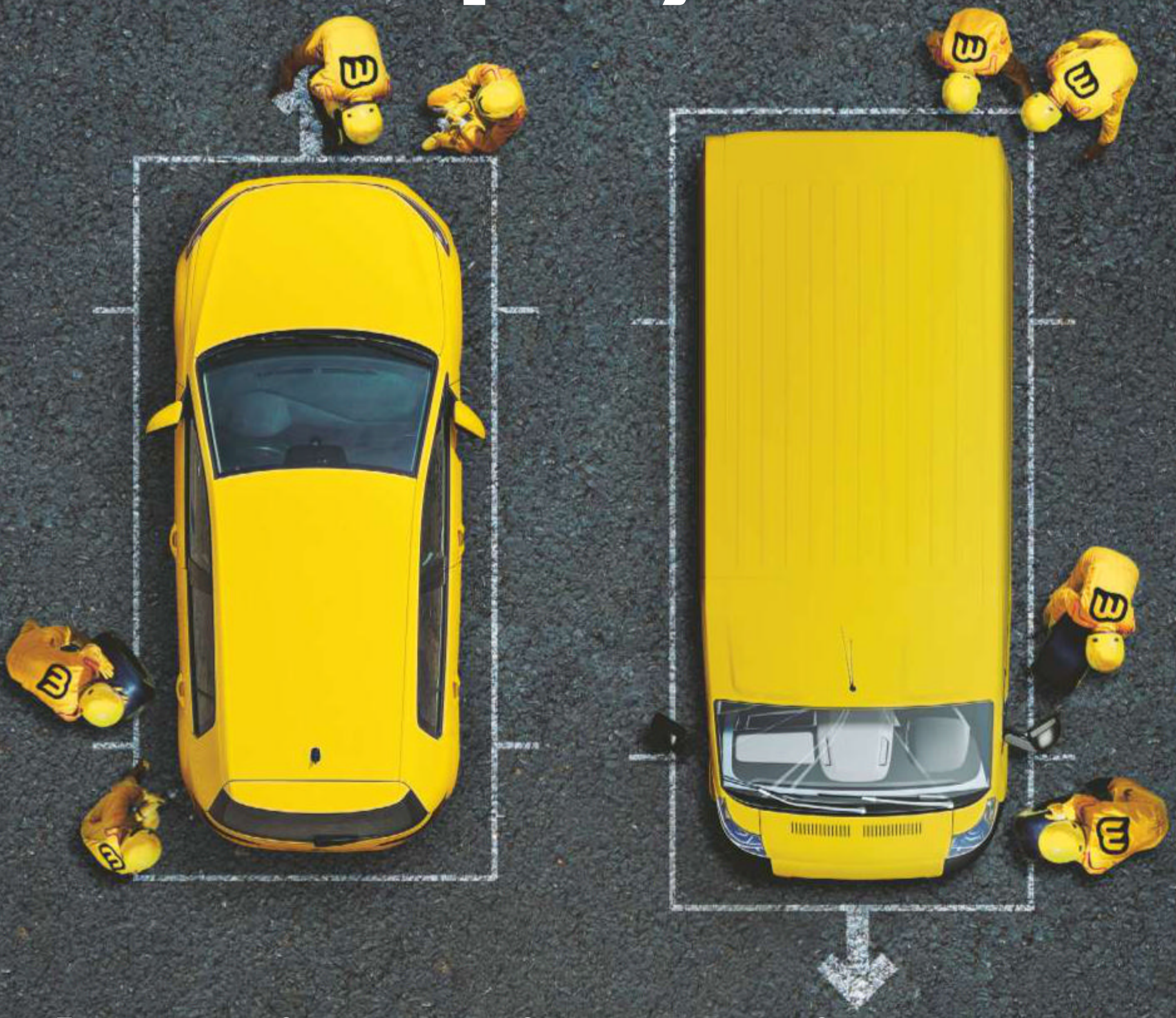


Shoes, Linzi, £29.99



Skirt, 6-22, Marks & Spencer, £35

Car or van, work or play



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Romantic TOUCHES

Give your outfit a lift with playful pops of pink and red

Scarf, Monsoon, £22

Shoes, Zara, £35.99

Sunglasses, Ace&Tate, £40

Bag, Cath Kidston, £64

Hair clip, New Look, £4.99

Scarf, Accessorize, £30

Bracelet, Accessorize, £12

Bag, Mango £29.99

Belt, Boden, £40

Shoes, Schuh, £35

Ring, Asos, £8

Socks, Happy Socks, £12

Earrings, Claire's, £10

Hat, Oliver Bonas, £28

Bag, Marks & Spencer, £35

Compiled by Matilda Stanley

Winter Haircare SOS

Make every day a good hair day

L'ORÉAL PARIS
ELVIVE
BOND REPAIR
RESCUE PRE-SHAMPOO
GROW GORGEOUS
BALANCE
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Fight The Frizz

When your hair is feeling dry, it will absorb moisture from the air which can quickly leave your barnet looking frizzy, and this is often worse when you're dealing with cold temperatures outside and central heating. Nurse parched hair back to health by using **L'Oréal Bond Repair Rescue Pre Shampoo**, £14.99, before your usual shampoo, and it will quickly heal and hydrate brittle strands. Or try a weekly protein-rich treatment like **Kevin.Murphy Re.Store**, £36. The nourishing formula is like a big drink for your locks and will restore strength and softness to banish flyaways. Post-wash, apply **Grow Gorgeous Balance Fibre-Sealing Split Ends Treatment**, £24, to tame fuzz and leave the ends of your hair looking neat and polished.

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SMOOTH & SHINE SHAMPOO
Rice Water Infusion & Starch
hair proud
SHINE SAUCE

Revitalise Shine

Don't panic if your hair is looking dull and lacklustre – it's a common woe at this time of year and can easily be remedied. Start with lightweight shampoo like **Garnier Ultimate Blends Smooth & Shine Shampoo**, £5.50, to cleanse locks without stripping them of natural oils. A deep treatment mask can make a huge difference too – **HairProud Shine Sauce Mask**, £14.95 will hydrate and smooth strands to bring back shine in less than 10 minutes. A hair oil like **Liz Earle Botanical Shine Nourishing Oil**, £22 can be applied to damp or dry hair and adds a silky feel to lengths with a sheen that lasts all day.

Bring Back Bounce

Issues such as menopause and over-styling can cause hair to thin out and feel a little flat. If your strands are in need of a volume boost, it's best to start from the roots. Apply **Kerasilk Re-densifying Scalp Serum**, £36, around your parting a couple of times a week to strengthen your scalp and hair follicles to prevent further loss. Instant volumisers like **Aveda Invati Ultra Advanced Thickening Foam**, £31, can make a huge difference too. Rake it through damp hair before blow drying and it will thicken and boost the depth of your tresses for a bouncier finish. For a quick fix, flip your hair upside down and blast with **Monday Haircare Dry Shampoo**, £4 – it will add texture and lift while slurping up oils to leave your hair looking and feeling full, with plenty of swish.

MONDAY
VOLUME DRY SHAMPOO
KERASILK
AVEDA
invati
ultra advanced
thickening foam

Deal With Greys

Struggling with rough, grey hairs? This is because silver strands don't produce as many natural oils, so look for products that are designed to target this issue. **Silvina London Grey Hair Shampoo**, **£27**, will deep-clean greys while softening. A replenishing oil, like **Moroccanoil Purple Treatment**, **£15.50**, can be slathered through wet hair to condition strands while balancing out any brassy or yellowish tones. If you are not ready to embrace your new colour yet, try touching up silvery strands around your parting with **Color Wow Root Cover Up**, **£29.50**, which can be dusted over regrowth and blended for a natural-looking finish.

WOW
COLOR WOW

The Original
L'Original
MOROCCANOIL
M
MOROCCANOIL TREATMENT
TRAITEMENT MOROCCANOIL
PURPLE

SILVINA LONDON
Grey Hair
SHAMPOO
Shine & hydration

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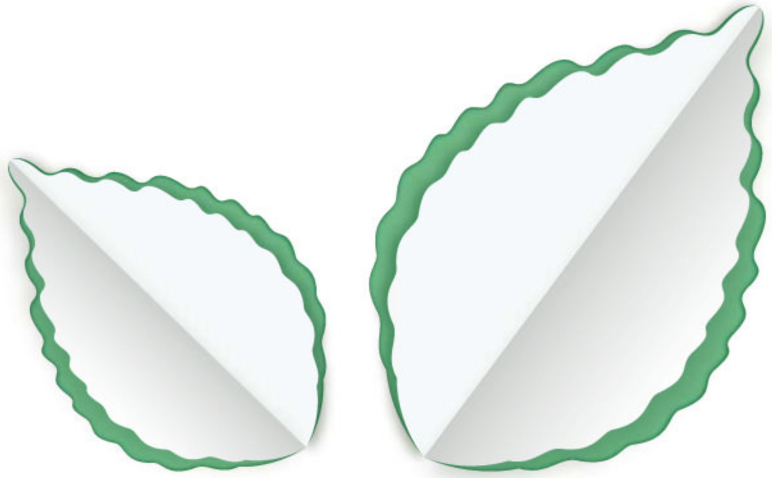

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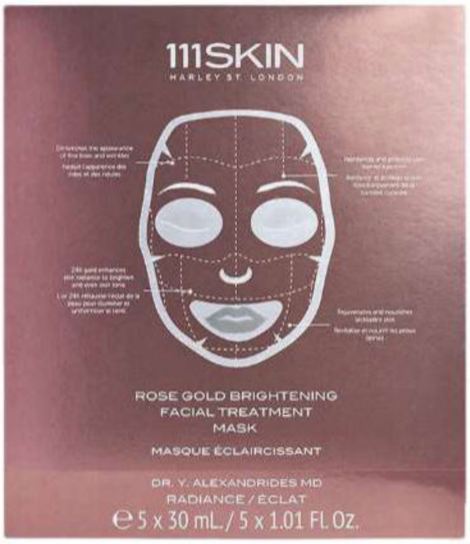
8.5 fl oz / 250 ml

A glow-boosting tonic with glycolic acid, which is the star ingredient, to help exfoliate your complexion for firmer, brighter results. **Pixi Glow Tonic, £18**


111SKIN
HARLEY ST. LONDON
ROSE GOLD BRIGHTENING FACIAL TREATMENT MASK
MASQUE ÉCLAIRCISSANT
DR. Y. ALEXANDRIDES MD
RADIANCE / ÉCLAT
5 x 30 mL / 5 x 1.01 FL Oz.

An award-winning brightening mask that offers both instant smoothing and long-term skin improvements. Use it once a week after cleansing for soft, healthy-looking results. **111SKIN Rose Gold Brightening Facial Treatment Mask, £20**

SUPER FACIALIST
VITAMIN C+
BRIGHTEN
Skin Renew Cleansing Oil
100ml 3.33 fl oz

Made with vitamin C, this cleansing oil helps to perk up dull complexions, while reducing the appearance of age spots and giving skin a thorough clean. **Super Facialist Vitamin C+ Cleansing Oil, £12**

Facetheory
Marula Glow Face & Body Oil
Huile Éclat Visage & Corps au Marula
100ml / 3.4 fl.oz

Our current favourite face treat is this hydrating oil, which contains organic marula oil and vitamin E, both of which are important for anti-ageing and skin barrier function. **Facetheory Marula Oil Glow Face & Body Oil, £19**

THE BODY SHOP
VITAMIN C
GLOW BOOSTING INTENSE MOISTURISER
50 ml 1.7 OZ (49 g)

Gentle but hard working, you'll have glowy, hydrated skin in no time with this rich vitamin C-infused cream. We're big fans! **The Body Shop Vitamin C Glow Boosting Intense Moisturiser, £22**

PS...
Skin
10% Vitamin C Serum
With Orange Peel Oil
25ML 0.84 US FL OZ

If you're after an extra level of glow, add a vitamin C serum into your routine. This brightening bargain features 10% of the good stuff, meaning it is unmatched in its ability to instantly illuminate. **Primark PS... Skin 10% Vitamin C Serum, £7**

bondi sands
Everyday skincare
Eye Spy
BRIGHTENING EYE CREAM
+ VITAMIN C
+ GREEN COFFEE BEANS
Australian Made

We love this uplifting eye cream. It uses illuminating particles to promote perkier under-eyes with diminished dark circles. **Bondi Sands Eye Spy Vitamin C Eye Cream, £9.99**

By Phoebe Denman

The Fast 800 diet

Continuing Dr Michael Mosley's legacy, this healthy eating plan is steeped in science

We've teamed up with The Fast 800 to show you how delicious and nutritious their 5:2™ eating plan is – helping you lose weight and live a healthier and higher-quality life. This science-based programme was co-founded by the late Dr Michael Mosley, along with his wife Clare, and a team of doctors and weight-loss experts. The Fast 800 is dedicated to continuing Dr Mosley's legacy to help you lose the excess pounds, and keep them off, for better mental clarity, sleep, blood pressure and energy.

HOW IT WORKS

On a fasting day, eat around 800-900 calories of Mediterranean-style foods, aiming to eat within a 12-hour window for maximum health benefits. On non-fasting days, continue to have healthy foods and sensible portions, but there's no need to count calories. How many days you fast for each week depends on your goal, but here's an example of Dr Mosley's famous 5:2 plan (fasting for two days a week).

YOUR 5-DAY PLAN

You can add extra low-calorie, non-starchy veggies to any of the meals if you wish, for extra filling fibre. To get to a week's worth of meals simply repeat the non-fasting days for a total of five and stick to the two fasting days.

Day 1: Non-fasting day

Total – 1465 calories, 86.3g protein, 49.6g carbs, 95.4g fat, 29.1g fibre

Breakfast

Pear and walnut muffins

Serves one

641 calories, 28.3g protein, 8.8g fibre, 16.3g carbs, 12.9g sugar, 50.3g fat

Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas 6. Line or oil three holes of a muffin tin. In a large mixing bowl add 25g plain full-fat Greek yogurt; 2 eggs; 60g ground almonds; half a pear, grated or cubed; 10g walnuts, crushed; 1tsp cinnamon and ½tsp baking powder. Place into the three holes. Bake for 17-20min or until golden and firm to the touch.

Lunch

Mushroom and mixed bean chilli

*Serves two**

*327 calories 18.7g protein, 13.1g fibre, 27.8g carbs, 12.3g sugar, 11.9g fat *Keep leftovers for Day 2 dinner*

Heat 1tsp extra-virgin olive oil in a pan and add 2tsp ground cumin, 2tsp ground coriander, 1tsp ground paprika and ½tsp chilli flakes. Heat through for 1min. Add half an onion, diced, and cook for 5min. Add 250g button mushrooms, sliced, and fry for a further 2-3min. Add a splash of water if it's getting stuck. Add 2 garlic cloves, sliced, and fry for 1-2min. Tip in 400g tinned chopped tomatoes, 100ml water, 400g tinned mixed beans, drained and rinsed. Season and bring to the boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 20min with the lid half on. While this is cooking, mix 40g full-fat Greek yogurt with the zest and juice from a quarter of a lime, and a splash of water. Put in the fridge until you're ready to serve. Serve the chilli topped with 40g Cheddar cheese, grated, the lime yogurt and some coriander leaves.

Dinner

Pesto baked fish with greens

Serves two

497 calories, 39.3g protein, 7.2g fibre, 5.5g carbs, 33.2g fat per serving

Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas 6. Prepare a tray with baking paper. Add 20g ground almonds; 40g basil leaves, roughly chopped; 20g pine nuts and 2 garlic cloves to a blender and pulse to achieve a paste. Squeeze in a little lemon juice and add 40g Parmesan cheese, 2tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, and season with sea salt. Whiz to combine well, keeping a thick, paste-like texture. Spoon and pat the pesto paste all over 240g firm white fish fillets, skin off. Sit the fish on the baking tray and add one lemon, cut into wedges, to the tray also. Roast for 15min, or until the fish is golden and cooked through. Heat 2tsp extra-virgin olive oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Add half a courgette, cut into 5cm batons; 1 bunch broccolini, stems trimmed and tops cut in half; 6 asparagus spears, woody ends trimmed; 100g green beans; and sauté for approx. 5-7min. Remove from the heat. Stir in the lemon zest and juice from one lemon, and season. Serve the fish with your greens and a wedge of lemon.

Day 2: Fasting day

Total – 903 calories, 61.7g protein, 59.8g carbs, 40.4g fat, 22.3g fibre

Breakfast

Cinnamon cooked apples

Serves two

284 calories, 6.8g protein, 4.2g fibre, 23.7g carbs, 22.9g sugar, 17g fat

In a saucepan, over a low heat, toss 20g walnuts, chopped, for a few min until starting to golden. Remove and set aside. In the same saucepan, add 100ml water, 2 green apples, chopped into chunks and 1tsp ground cinnamon. Cook for about 8min, stirring occasionally. You may need to add some extra water. Scoop 200g plain full-fat Greek yogurt into bowls, top with the apples and sprinkle over the walnuts.

Lunch

Chicken zoodle soup

Serves one

292 calories, 36.2g protein, 5g fibre, 8.3g carbs, 6.7g sugar, 11.5g fibre

Layer half a courgette and half a carrot, both spiralised, into a bowl along with 1tbsp peanut butter; 2tsp tamari sauce; 1 spring onion, sliced; ¼tsp dried chilli flakes; 100g cooked chicken, cooked and shredded; ½tsp chicken stock powder and fresh coriander. Pour over 250ml boiled water, cover loosely and let sit for 2min. Stir and enjoy.

Dinner

Mushroom and mixed bean chilli leftovers from day 1

Day 3: Non-fasting day

Total – 1526 calories, 82g protein, 68.9g carbs, 97.8g fat, 23.9g fibre

Breakfast

Blueberry apple porridge

Serves one

453 calories, 17.2g protein, 11.7g fibre, 52.5g carbs, 29.3g sugar, 16.9g fat

Place 40g whole rolled oats, 1tsp ground cinnamon, 15g chia seeds, 200ml full fat milk and 100ml water in a small pan and bring to a simmer. Cook for 4-5min, stirring frequently. Take off the heat, stir in half an apple, grated, and 50g blueberries, fresh or frozen. Top with 40g plain full-fat Greek yogurt.

Lunch

Ricotta fritters with beetroot

Serves one

506 calories, 20.4g protein, 6.1g fibre, 7.8g carbs, 7g sugar, 42.5g fat

Make a quick pickle by pouring 1tbsp apple cider vinegar over half a beetroot, grated, with a little salt. Stir and set aside in the fridge. Toast 10g pumpkin seeds and 10g sunflower seeds in a frying pan for a couple of min, until turning golden. Set aside. In a bowl, mix the egg yolk from 1 large free-range egg (save the white for later), 80g ricotta cheese, 5g Parmesan cheese, grated, and 20g ground almonds, together with 5g fresh chives, chopped, and 5g flat-leaf parsley, chopped. Set this aside while you whisk the egg white into soft peaks in a separate bowl. Fold the egg white through the ricotta mix gently, trying to keep as much air in as possible. Add 1tbsp extra-virgin olive oil in a non-stick frying pan over a low heat and drop a heaped tbsp of batter in (about 3-4 per serving). Flatten them out so they're an

Continued over the page...

even thickness. Cook for 2min on each side – until golden brown and set in the middle. Serve warm, topped with the beetroot and seeds. Sprinkle with some extra chives and some chilli flakes if you want.

Dinner

Lamb chops and minted peas

*Serves two**

*567 calories, 44.4g protein, 6.1g fibre, 8.6g carbs, 4.4g sugar, 38.4g fat *Keep leftovers for Day 5 lunch*

Fry a 260g lamb chop, trimmed of fat, in a frying pan with 1tbsp extra virgin olive oil for a few mins each side until cooked to your liking. Set aside to rest and keep warm. Steam 200g frozen peas until soft. Mash slightly and mix through 1tbsp extra-virgin olive oil; half a red chilli, deseeded and finely diced; 60g feta; 20g pine nuts, toasted, and some fresh mint. Serve the mashed peas with the lamb.

Day 4:
Fasting day

Totals – 821 calories, 56.6g protein, 35.6g carbs, 47.1g fat, 14.1g fibre

Breakfast

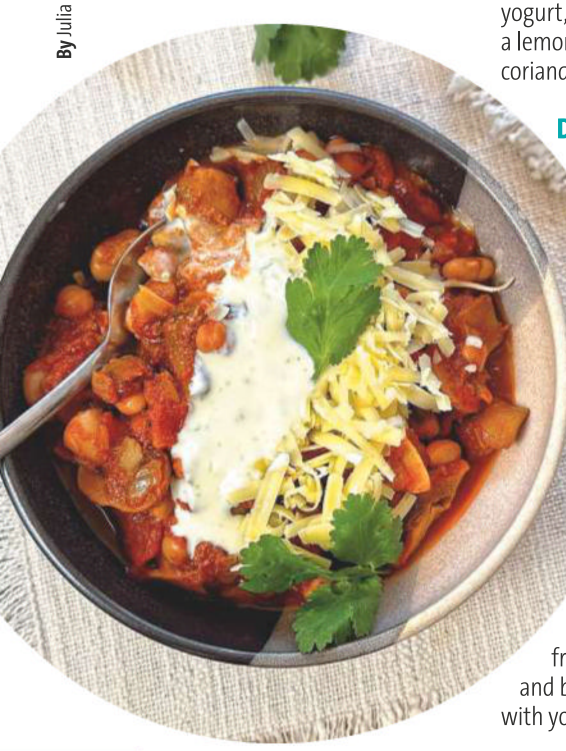
Herby mushroom baked eggs

Serves one

288 calories, 18.5g protein, 3.4g fibre, 3.4g carbs, 0.3g sugar, 21.8g fat

Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas 6. De-stem and clean two portobello mushrooms (so there is room for the eggs to go in later) and place them, top side down, on a lined baking tray. Divide 15g butter between each mushroom and spread fresh thyme, leaves pulled, and fresh parsley, finely chopped, evenly across the top (be generous with your herbs). Bake for 15-20min until the mushrooms have softened. Carefully crack a large egg into each mushroom, season and place back in the oven for about 10min until the eggs are cooked to your liking.Garnish with some additional herbs if you wish.

By Julia Smurthwaite. **Pictures** Shutterstock



Lunch

Lentil spinach dhal

Serves one

249 calories, 14.1g protein, 6.6g fibre, 28g carbs, 4.5g sugar, 7.1g fat

Heat 1tsp extra-virgin olive oil in a frying pan over a low heat. Add half an onion, peeled and diced, and cook for 4-5min. Add half a red chilli, finely chopped; ½tsp ground cumin; ¼tsp ground turmeric, and cook for 2min, stirring. Add 40g dry red split lentils, rinsed well, to the pan and turn up the heat. Fry the lentils for a few mins and then pour in 125ml vegetable stock. Turn the heat down and leave the lentils to simmer for approximately 15min. Add 50g spinach leaves, chopped, and cook, stirring, for a further 2min. Season to taste. Serve topped with 10g full-fat Greek yogurt, and the juice from a quarter of a lemon, then sprinkle with fresh coriander, chopped.

Dinner

Pork and fennel burger

Serves one

284 calories, 24g protein, 4g fibre, 4.2g carbs, 18.2g fat

Cut open 160g free range pork sausages and squeeze out the contents into a bowl. Add ¼tsp fennel seeds, ½tsp dried chilli flakes (optional) and the zest from a quarter of a lemon. Use your hands to mash the spices into the mix. Form a patty and fry in a pan for 6-8min each side, turning frequently, until cooked through and browned on the outside. Serve with your favourite side salad.

Day 5:
Non-fasting day

Total – 1567 calories, 92.3g protein, 64.2g carbs, 99.3g fat, 25.3g fibre.

Breakfast

Sweet potato toast with avocado and egg

Serves one

512 calories, 23.2g protein, 5.4g fibre, 14.8g carbs, 6.3g sugar, 39.1g fat

Cut 100g sweet potato into a 1cm thick slice, lengthways, to form your toast (the middle will make the best slice). Brush both sides with 1tsp extra-virgin olive oil and put into the toaster on the highest setting. While it's toasting, cook 2 large eggs, either poached, fried or scrambled. Check your 'toast'; it should be fork tender, but not soggy. Top with half an avocado, sliced, the eggs and 30g feta. Add a pinch of dried chilli flakes if you wish.

Lunch

Lamb chops and minted peas leftovers from day 3 dinner

Dinner

Quinoa stuffed peppers

Serves one

488 calories, 24.7g protein, 13.8g fibre, 40.8g carbs, 15.1g sugar, 21.8g fat.

Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas 4 and line a baking tray. Cut a red pepper in half lengthways, removing the stalk and seeds. Place on the tray. Simmer 40g dry quinoa, rinsed and drained, in 200ml vegetable stock until cooked through and the little tails have appeared. In a mixing bowl, combine the 100g tinned black beans, 1tsp cumin, ½tsp paprika, ¼tsp chilli flakes, and the cooked quinoa, and scoop into the prepared pepper halves. Bake, covered in foil, in the oven for 30min. Remove, sprinkle on 30g Cheddar cheese, grated, and return to the oven uncovered for 10-15min, until the cheese is melted and browning. Serve topped with a quarter of an avocado, sliced, and fresh coriander.

FOR MORE HELP

To discover more delicious meals and extra advice check out The Fast 800's signature 12-week programme – and our special discount! Our editor Rachel loves the plan: 'I've lost weight and feel fantastic! I can't believe how easy it is. I'm surprisingly not hungry and having looser clothes is such a boost. The food is nutritious and tasty. I feel really motivated.'

For days when cooking from scratch isn't possible, The Fast 800 has a wide range of tasty, convenient options, made from natural ingredients with no added sugar, for extra support with intermittent fasting and weight-loss. The range includes shakes, protein bars, keto hot chocolate, and an apple and blackcurrant clear protein drink.

the fast800

25% OFF THE 12-WEEK PROGRAMME

For a limited time, *Bella* readers can get 25% off the full price of The Fast 800 12-week programme. Valid for new members, and normally £119, the plan offers three flexible approaches that follow the principles of a moderately low-carb, Mediterranean-style diet. You'll get more than 850 recipes, flexible meal plans, guided at-home workouts, meditations, and support from an online community and qualified health experts. For your discount visit thefast800.com/programme and apply the code BELLA25 at the checkout. Offer is valid until 23.59GMT on 28 February 2025.

● Terms and conditions apply, please see thefast800.com for details.

NB. If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, under 18 or have a medical condition please seek professional advice before changing your diet.

This week we're...

Keep up-to-date with the latest trends in the foodie world

DRINKING...

Available in three flavours, PerfectTed's Nespresso-compatible pods are a convenient way of bringing matcha to more people than ever. A powdered green tea that offers a healthier source of caffeine, matcha provides longer-lasting energy that also improves alertness and helps produce serotonin. From perfectted.com, Tesco and Holland & Barrett (**£4** for 10).

PERFECT ted
VANILLA MATCHA
SALTED CARAMEL MATCHA
CEREMONIAL GRADE MATCHA
10X NESPRESSO COMPATIBLE CAPSULES

EATING...

Asda has just the thing for couples on Valentine's Day – half-and-half pizzas in the shape of a heart! Perfect for lovers who aren't quite as compatible on pizza flavours as they are on paper... Available in three flavours. Asda, **£3.50**.

STAYING HEALTHY...

These Yay! Mushrooms AM & PM Cold Pressed Shots are full of goodness. Containing two key mushroom powders, Lion's Mane and Reishi, the drinks claim to help you focus in the morning and wind down in the evening. Rest assured, if you're not a big mushroom fan, the drinks do not taste of them! Available at M&S (**£3** for two x 200ml and **£1.60** for 100ml).

M&S
YAY! MUSHROOMS
PM Dosing Shots
AM Dosing Shots
Kew

KITTING OUT YOUR KITCHEN...

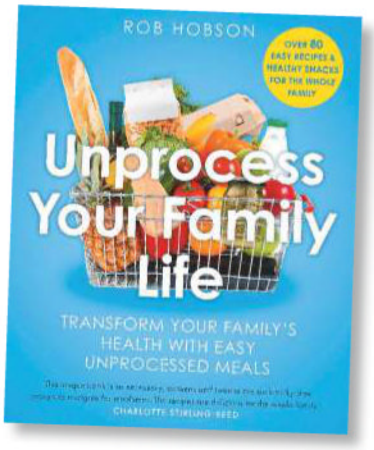
Make sure your kitchen is ready for all of your baking needs (don't forget Pancake Day on 4 March), by treating yourself to this Rustic Charm mixing bowl (**£29.50**) and batter bowl (**£27**) from Mason Cash. With an elegant and sophisticated design, and made from chip-resistant stoneware, these timeless bowls will last for years. From masoncash.co.uk.

GIFTING...

These luxurious macarons are perfect for sharing on Valentine's Day this 14 February. Crisp and light (and slightly chewy on the inside) with a beautiful creamy filling, Hilton macarons are just about the best out there. This mixed box of 12 contains vanilla, raspberry, pistachio, and salted caramel flavours, among others. From hiltonmacarons.co.uk (from **£13** for six).

READING...

Unprocess Your Family Life (Thorsons, **£18.99**), by award-winning nutritionist Rob Hobson is a must-read for 2025. Research has shown that the UK's children and adolescents have some of the poorest diets, with more than 65% of the food they eat being ultra-processed. Full of practical tips, easy swaps and delicious recipes, this book will help transform your family's eating habits. Visit @robhobsonnutritionist. From good bookshops and Amazon.


ROB HOBSON
OVER 80 EASY RECIPES & HEALTHY SNACKS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY
Unprocess Your Family Life
TRANSFORM YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH WITH EASY UNPROCESSED MEALS

By Hayley Merrick. **Pictures** Pr images/Ola O. Smit

Slim down in

Calories per serving: 481

Mediterranean-style chicken stew with feta dumplings

Serves 4 *Takes* 1hr 20min

- Low-calorie cooking spray
- 500g skinless, boneless chicken thighs (visible fat removed), diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 1tsp dried oregano
- 2 peppers (mixed colours), deseeded and diced
- 1 courgette, cut into 1cm thick half moons
- 3tbsp tomato purée
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 750ml chicken stock (made with 1 chicken stock cube)
- 400g can butter beans, drained
- 12 pitted black olives, halved

FOR THE DUMPLINGS

- 150g self-raising flour
- 1tsp baking powder
- 50g reduced-fat feta cheese, crumbled
- Handful of flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 150g fat-free Greek yogurt

1 *Spray a large saucepan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. When hot, add the diced chicken and onion and fry for 10min, until the chicken is well sealed and the onions have started to soften.*

2 *Add the garlic and oregano and cook for a further 1min, until fragrant, then add the peppers and courgette. Stir in the tomato purée, chopped tomatoes and stock. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer. Cover with a lid and cook for 30min.*

3 *Meanwhile, make the dumplings. Add the flour, baking powder, feta, half the chopped parsley and a pinch each of salt and pepper to a mixing bowl and stir well. Add the yogurt and gently stir until a dough forms. Don't knead and be careful not to overwork the dough as this can produce tough dumplings. Shape into 4 dumplings and cover until the stew is ready.*

4 *After 30min, stir the butter beans and olives into the stew. When it starts to bubble again, place the dumplings on top, cover and cook for a further 20–25min, until they are risen and fluffy and a skewer comes out clean when inserted into the middle. Sprinkle with the remaining parsley and serve. The stew and dumplings will keep in the fridge for up to 3 days.*

one!

Low-cal recipes made in one pot, pan or dish, from best-selling food writers Pinch of Nom

Smoky chicken & chorizo soup

Serves 6 *Takes* 55min

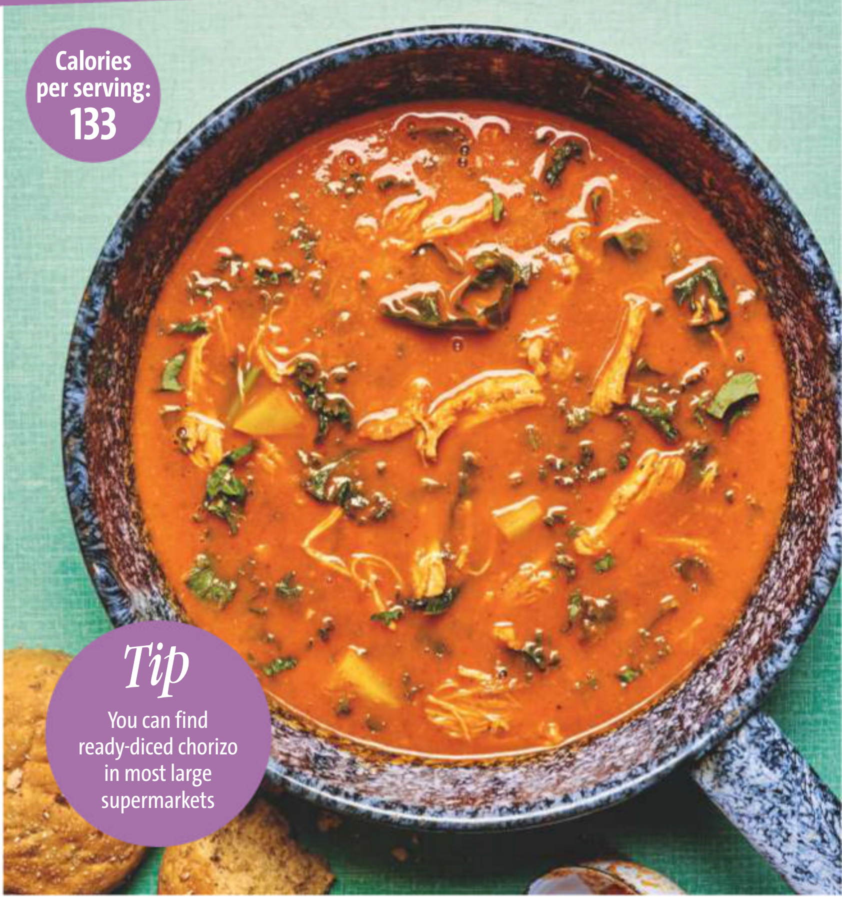
- Low-calorie cooking spray
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1tbsp sweet smoked paprika
- ½tsp mild chilli powder
- 3 skinless, boneless chicken thighs (visible fat removed), about 75g each
- 50g diced chorizo (see Tip)
- 1L chicken stock (made with 1 chicken stock cube)
- 480g jar roasted red peppers in brine, drained and roughly chopped
- 200g potato, peeled and cut into small chunks
- 30g curly kale, shredded
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 60g wholemeal bread rolls, to serve (optional, +146 calories per roll)

1 Spray a large saucepan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 8–10min, until soft and golden, then add the garlic and cook for a further 2min. Lower the heat, add the paprika and chilli powder and cook gently for 1min, stirring.

2 Increase the heat, add the chicken thighs and chorizo and cook for 3–4min, until sealed and lightly browned on all sides. Add the stock, roasted red peppers and potato. Bring to the boil, then lower the heat, cover and simmer for 25min or until the potato is soft and the chicken thighs are cooked.

3 Remove from the heat and remove the chicken thighs from the pan. Set aside. Use a stick blender to blitz the soup until smooth. Alternatively, use a food processor to blitz until smooth, then return it to the pan. (You may need to do this in batches depending on the size of your food processor.)

4 Shred the cooked chicken thighs using two forks and add back to the soup in the pan. Add the kale and simmer for 3–4min or until the kale is tender and the soup is piping hot. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Serve alone, with a wholemeal roll or other accompaniment of choice. The soup will keep in the fridge for up to 3 days.



Calories per serving: 133

Tip

You can find ready-diced chorizo in most large supermarkets

Calories per serving: 279

Tip

To cook in the oven, arrange the bread swirls in the bottom of an ovenproof dish approximately 23cm x 14cm. Continue with step 2, then bake at 210°C/fan 200°C for 30min.

Slow cooker cinnamon roll pudding

Serves 4 *Takes* 1hr 45min on high, 2hr 45min-3hr 15min on low, plus standing

- 9 slices of lighter Danish white bread
- 350ml skimmed milk
- 3 medium eggs
- 2tsp ground cinnamon
- 2tbsp white granulated sweetener
- 2tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE ICING

- 2tbsp icing sugar
- 2tbsp reduced-fat soft cheese
- 1tsp cold water

1 Cut the bread slices vertically into 3 strips. Roll the strips of bread up into spirals and place into the bottom of the dish of the slow cooker.

2 Put the milk, eggs, cinnamon, sweetener and vanilla in a jug or bowl and whisk together until smooth and combined. Pour the milk mixture evenly over the bread slices and leave to stand for 10min.

3 Cover with the lid and cook on low for 2hr 30min, or on high for 3hr 30min. The custard should be set, and the bread will be beginning to brown and crisp around the edges.

4 In a small bowl, combine the icing sugar with the soft cheese and water and mix until smooth. Drizzle over the pudding and serve.

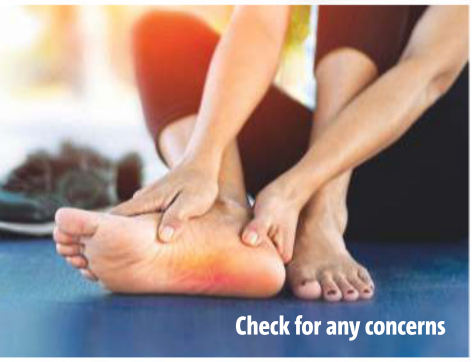
Pinch of Nom
ALL IN ONE
ONE-PAN, SLIMMING MEALS
Kate and Kay Allinson

These recipes are taken from ***Pinch of Nom All In One*** **by Kate and Kay Allinson** (Bluebird, £22)

Edited by: Angela Romeo. **Recipes:** Kate and Kay Allinson. **Pictures:** Ellis Parrinder

4 weeks to fit feet

Transform your foot health with these pro tips



Check for any concerns

From corns and calluses to bunions and blisters, our feet can often be the cause of discomfort and pain. And it's no wonder, according to Advanced Health Foot Practitioner Katie Simner. 'Our feet bear the entire weight of our bodies. Over periods of time, this constant strain can lead to wear and tear on the muscles, joints, ligaments and bones in the feet,' she explains. 'Poor foot health can also affect posture and the alignment of the rest of the body, leading to problems in the knees, hips and lower back as we age. Foot care including regular exercise, wearing correct footwear and seeking help for foot issues early, can help maintain overall wellbeing.'

Luckily there is plenty you can do to improve your foot health. Follow these expert tips and you should notice a huge difference in just four weeks!

Check your fit

Shoes that don't fit properly are the cause of a lot of foot problems, according to Katie. 'Buying decent footwear can reduce discomfort and pain in the feet, and prevent issues, such as calluses, blisters, bunions and plantar fasciitis. It can also aid with stability and balance, preventing injuries and promote better blood circulation.'

To ensure your shoes fit properly, Katie says, 'There should be enough space in the toe area of your shoes to wiggle freely without being cramped. The shoe should comfortably hug the sides of your feet without pinching. Ensure the shoe provides adequate support to the arch area, and if you have flat feet or high arches then look for shoes to cater specifically to this area, or insoles designed for this.

'Your shoes should feel comfortable from the start, if they're uncomfortable in the shop it's unlikely to get better. And remember the type of socks you'll want to wear with your footwear as this impacts the fit.'

> 'Poor foot health can affect posture, leading to problems in the knees, hips and lower back'

Trim your toenails

Cutting your toenails regularly and properly can prevent issues like ingrown toenails and infections. To do it properly, Katie advises, 'Soak your feet in warm water for about 10-15 minutes as this can soften the nails and make them easier to cut. After soaking, dry your feet thoroughly, especially between the toes. Cut the toenail straight across, avoid rounding the corners as this can lead to ingrown toenails. You can use nail scissors or clippers, depending on your preference.

Make sure shoes fit properly

If the edges are sharp after cutting, use a nail file to smooth them out. It is recommended to do this every four to six weeks.'

Ingrown toenails occur when the edge of a toenail grows into the surrounding skin which can lead to pain, redness, swelling and sometimes infection.

'Soaking feet in warm water can help reduce swelling and relieve pain,' says Katie. 'Apply antiseptic cream and wearing open-toed or loose-fitting shoes can ease pressure on the toes. If you have signs of infection, see your GP as you may need the infection drained or antibiotics.'

Tackle hard skin

Hard skin, corns and calluses (small lumps or patches of hard skin) are caused by friction. Katie explains, 'Things like repeated rubbing against shoes or surfaces can cause the skin to thicken via friction, pressure or irritation. I recommend moisturising daily, and to use a pumice stone or foot file to reduce or remove the thickened skin. Soaking feet in warm water beforehand for 10-15 minutes is ideal. You can also use exfoliating foot scrubs. Corn pads can be brought from a pharmacy.'

If your hard skin is severe, Katie adds, 'A foot health professional can remove the hard skin and assess the area. To prevent hard skin, choose shoes that fit well and provide adequate cushioning, and keep feet clean and moisturised.'

Get the ball rolling

If you feel pain in your heel or the arch of your feet, the chances are it's plantar fasciitis. Katie explains, 'Plantar fasciitis is a common condition that causes pain and inflammation of the plantar fascia, which is a thick band of tissue that runs across the bottom of the foot, connecting the heel bone to the toes.'

There are some treatments you can do at home, Katie says. 'Rest and raising your feet on a stool is important, and ice packs can help relieve the pain. Some stretching exercises can also be beneficial. Try placing a round object like a tennis ball, or a rolling pin, under the foot and roll it back and forth for two minutes – that can loosen the foot muscles. You could also do the same exercise with a frozen bottle of water and the cold may help reduce inflammation too.'

She adds, 'You can buy insoles for plantar fasciitis and well-fitting, comfortable shoes are important.'

If you're still not getting relief, Katie advises, 'A foot specialist can help with further treatment, such as shock wave therapy and custom orthotics.'

Beat bunions

Bunions are bony growths that form on the joint at the base of the big toe. Katie explains they are often caused by wearing shoes that are too narrow, tight, pointed or heeled shoes, as well as genetics and rheumatoid arthritis.

There are some treatments you can try at home. She explains, 'Wear comfortable footwear and avoid heels and pointy shoes. Your shoe should allow your toes to breathe and not be too tight. Walking barefoot also helps strengthen the foot muscles and allows your toes to be in their natural position.'

Simple stretching exercises can help too. 'There are a few to try. First, while standing or sitting, stretch your toes apart as far as you can. Secondly, try toe circles where you rotate your big toes around in circles to make them more flexible. Heel raises – standing on your toes – are also helpful to strengthen your ankle and calf muscles.'

She adds, 'If bunions become painful or uncomfortable, see a GP and get referred to seek professional help.'

> 'Plantar fasciitis is a common condition that causes pain and inflammation'

Treat infections

Notice a nail is thicker, discoloured or slightly deformed? Katie says, 'Onychomycosis is a condition where a fungus infects the nail. This usually starts at the tip or edge and spreads deeper into the nail. Symptoms include discolouration, thickening, brittleness, deformity and unpleasant odour.'

You can catch a fungal nail infection by sharing an infected nail clipper or towel, but you can also get one if your nails are frequently moist.

Treatment can take a while, Katie warns, but she says to get treatment as early as possible. 'There are over-the-counter treatments you can try as well as laser treatment. Your GP can prescribe oral medication too. Prevention is key here so practise good foot hygiene, keep nails trimmed and dry and wear breathable shoes. Avoid walking barefoot in public areas like swimming pools.'

Athlete's foot – a fungal infection that can enter the skin through cracks and wounds – often results in itchy white patches between the toes, dry, flaky skin or redness. Katie says, 'You can usually treat athlete's foot using antifungal creams, sprays and powders bought from your pharmacy.'

● *Katie Simner is an Advanced Foot Health Practitioner based in Birmingham. Follow her @katie.foot.health.practitioner*

Buff heels regularly

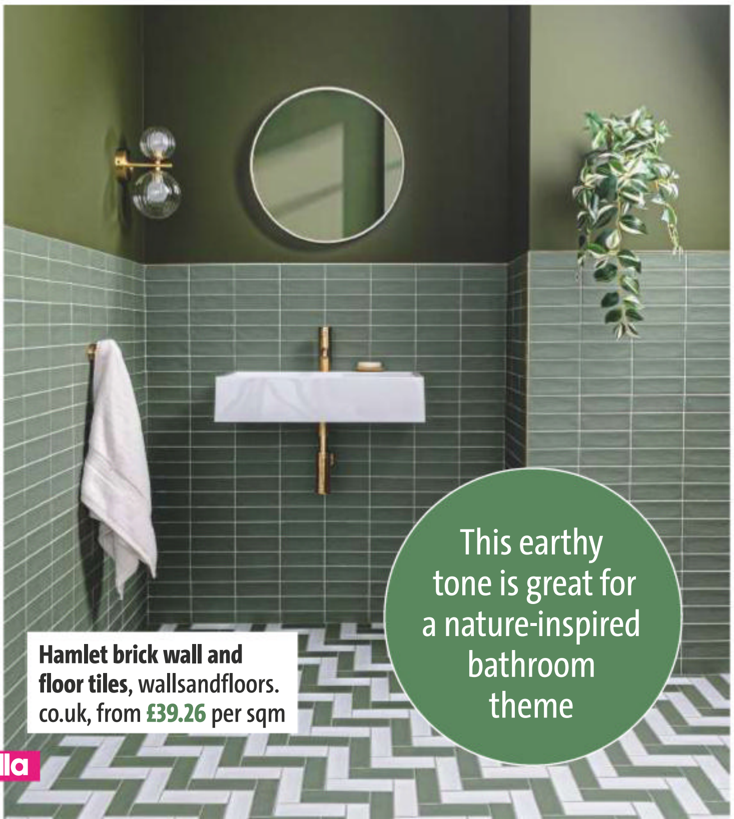
By Annabelle Lee. **Pictures:** Adobe Stock

Colour CRUSH

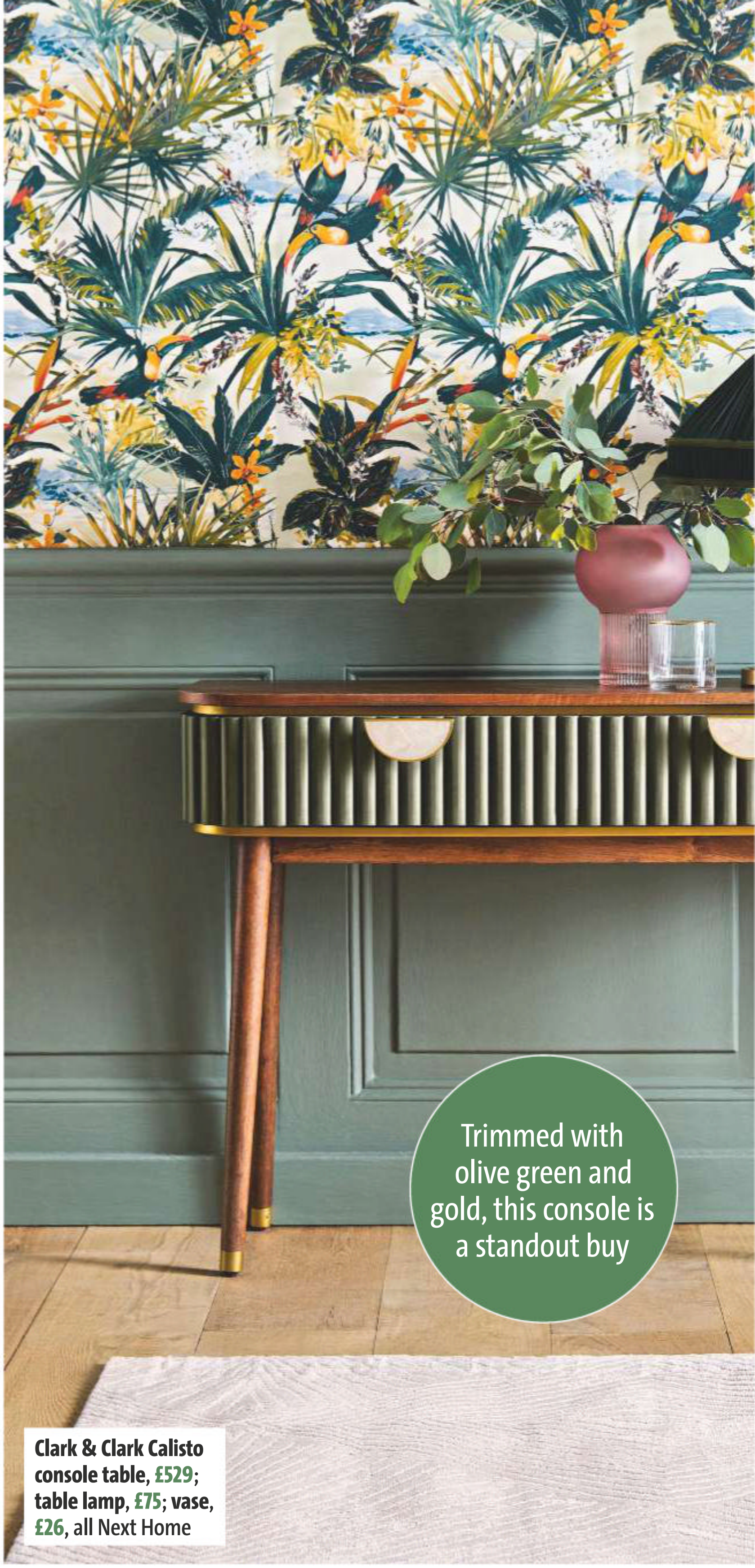
Bring this olive tone into your home for a natural, calming look that's right on trend

Fern impression glass vase, thewisteriatree.co.uk, £15.95

Olive and cream weave cushion, marquisanddawe.co.uk, £35


Hamlet brick wall and floor tiles, wallsandfloors.co.uk, from £39.26 per sqm

This earthy tone is great for a nature-inspired bathroom theme


Trimmed with olive green and gold, this console is a standout buy

Clark & Clark Calisto console table, £529; **table lamp,** £75; **vase,** £26, all Next Home

Laura Ashley Laneham vases, Next, from £26

Glass pillar candle holder, marquisanddawe.co.uk, £10

Olive green seaweed art print, beachhouseart.co.uk, £49

Olive watercolour wallpaper mural, wallsauce.com, from £35 per m2

Add this warming colour to your walls with a chic mural

Barley embossed cushion, Laura Ashley, £38

Calvinm armchair in olive green velvet, atkinandthyme.co.uk, £599

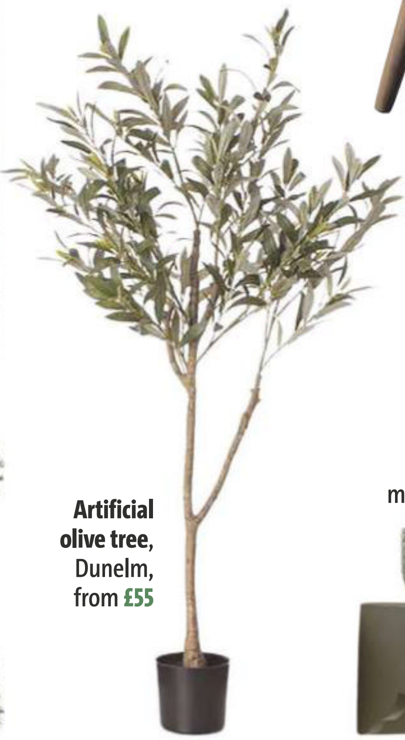
Wool blanket, countrymouse.co.uk, £79

Rustic pillar candle, thewisteriatree.co.uk, £6.75

Churchgate olive leaf and fern candle, Dunelm, £15

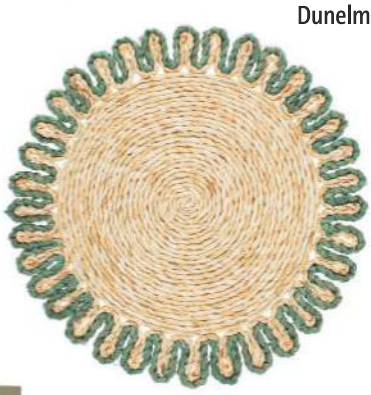
Faux succulent, Homesense, £6.99

French Connection tufted cushion, Next, £28



Artificial olive tree, Dunelm, from £55

Scalloped wall shelf, melodymaison.co.uk, £25.95



Corn husk placemat, Rex London, £6.95

By Zoe Bishop

THE DARKEST CRIMES AND EVIL MINDS

CRIME MONTHLY

UNMASKING THE AMAZON SERIAL KILLER
BURIED ALIVE
SARAH WAS FORCED TO DIG HER OWN GRAVE
CULT SECRETS
VILE LEADER HAD EIGHT YEAR OLD AS ONE OF HIS 13 WIVES
CRIME MONTHLY
ISSUE 72
FEBRUARY 2025
THE DARKEST CRIMES AND EVIL MINDS
SICK & TWISTED
MASKED MONSTER
DATE THAT ENDED IN DUNGEON HELL
EVIL ROOMMATE...
'BODY IN FREEZER' HORROR
DID DANIEL ROUSH POISON HIS LANDLADY TO STEAL HER LIFE?
MISSING PERSON
EMMA RAE GERVASI
DAD RESCUES KIDNAPPED DAUGHTER FROM 'RAPISTS'
THE LONELY HEARTS KILLERS:
DEADLY DUO SLAY MUM AND DROWN TODDLER
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facebook.com/bellamagazineUK
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£50 Star letter

Lovely Sarah

I enjoyed reading your interview with Sarah Beeny (issue 2). What a big project she and her family have taken on. After all that hard work, to be diagnosed with breast cancer must have been really disheartening. Thankfully the cancer was caught early. I wish her and her lovely family all the best.

Joyce Buxton, Mansfield

A future cure?

Thank you *Bella* for sharing the story of epilepsy and the sudden death of Daniella in issue 2. Donating her brain to science, it is hoped, will provide the family with answers and assist in gaining information. I wish her family well.

Jacqueline McCauley, Walthamstow

Talking point

Andropause is a natural process that men experience as they age. While some believe this can be compared to when women go through 'the change', others are sceptical. So, we ask, should we take the male menopause seriously?

As someone whose husband experienced terrible symptoms in midlife akin to menopause, I wholeheartedly think we should take it seriously.

Lisa Smith, via Facebook

Why must men and women always be pitted against each other in this way?!

Caroline John, via Facebook

If it has a name and causes debilitating symptoms, then yes we should.

G Miller, via Facebook

I don't think it sounds like quite the same thing, but as we are encouraging men to see a doctor if something is wrong, we probably shouldn't put them down if they're suffering!

Jean Greenville, via Facebook

By Stephen Leng. **Pictures** Nicky Johnston, Shutterstock

THIS WEEK Bella LOVES... Coverless duvets

If, like us, you struggle to regulate your temperature at night, then Night Lark's coverless duvets could be for you. In a range of colours and styles and different togs, they're suitable for warm summers or chilly winters. They're cosy, comfortable and are a great way to refresh your bedroom on a budget. Check out finebedding.co.uk/pages/night-lark-coverless-duvet for further details.

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'My husband died from a bee sting – but I believe he sent me my new love'

After tragedy struck, Whitney Allen, 37, was heartbroken. Now she's found a second chance at happiness…

Ryan in hospital

Walking out of the hospital, my husband Ryan squeezed my hand. We'd just had a scan for our second baby and after some concerns, we'd been reassured everything was OK. It was our wedding anniversary, and it was the best gift we could give each other. 'Two reasons to celebrate now,' Ryan said, as we left hospital and went to lunch. Ryan and I had been married for eight years. He was a police officer and was handsome, kind and already a great dad to our son, Jackson, three. I really couldn't wait to expand our family together.

Then, a couple of days later, in October 2021, while Jackson was at nursery, Ryan came home from the gym. 'I got stung by a bee on the way home, it feels weird,' he said, rubbing his arm. I could tell from his voice that something was seriously wrong, so I called an ambulance. Even with no history of allergic reactions, I was worried Ryan was going into anaphylactic shock. As I reeled off his symptoms, Ryan suddenly stumbled out the front door. Following him, I found him slumped over and gasping for air. 'Ryan!' I cried. My heart pounded as the operator instructed me to perform CPR. Tears began to course down my cheeks as Ryan's eyes closed.

Whitney and her boys

She has found love with Anthony

Moments later, paramedics arrived and Ryan went into cardiac arrest. Loading him into the ambulance, they rushed him to hospital. With medics treating him, I was forced to follow behind in a police car, praying all the way that Ryan would be OK.

> 'I had to give birth alone'

At the hospital, paramedics had got Ryan's heart pumping again but his brain had been without oxygen for so long, it had caused a severe brain injury. Seeing Ryan there in the hospital bed, it didn't seem real. Just that morning, we'd been sipping coffee together, now Ryan was in a coma and hooked up to beeping machines. While friends and family rallied round to help with Jackson, I stayed by Ryan's side. Due to Covid restrictions, doctors kept Jackson away. But when a month passed

Whitney, Ryan and Jackson

and Ryan made no progress, we got special permission for Jackson to see him. 'You can talk to him and hug him,' I said. At first, Jackson was hesitant, but then he clambered up on the bed.

Later, Ryan was discharged from ICU. But he was still completely unaware of his surroundings, he couldn't talk or move and he had no sense of his emotions. He was bedbound and moved to another part of the hospital. He was also being tube fed. It was horrific to see, especially as I was pregnant. I took leave from work to make time to see Ryan, I knew I had to be with him every day. As my pregnancy progressed, I was booked in for a Caesarean and Ryan's sister Morgan was going to be with me. But then we both tested positive for Covid, and in January 2022, I was forced to give birth alone. Our little boy, Leo Joseph, came into the world via C-section. Leo and I were separated for an hour before I was allowed to hold him.

Staring at his little face, I felt completely numb. But the next day, I watched in awe as Jackson beamed with pride at his baby brother. My mother-in-law, Karen, moved in with us temporarily to help. It was another month before I was allowed to take Leo to see Ryan, as babies weren't allowed in the hospital. It was only when Ryan was transferred to neuro-rehab that Leo could meet his dad. Placing our tiny boy on his chest, I couldn't help but think of the bond they would probably never share. I took pictures, but looking at them, I only felt grief. They were not the family snaps I'd hoped for.

Back home, I nursed a newborn and wrangled with a toddler, while Ryan, the person I'd planned to spend forever with, drifted further away. Five months after the bee sting, doctors broke the news that Ryan wasn't improving cognitively and he was also deteriorating physically. He was never going to make a meaningful recovery. After weeks of difficult discussions with Ryan's family, we made the decision to withdraw all life-sustaining care and place him in a hospice. 'The doctors can't make Daddy better,' I told Jackson. 'He's going to die, but before then, you can hug and kiss him goodbye.' 'OK,' he said and nodded. He was only four, he didn't really understand.

'It feels like a gift'

Ryan's police colleagues arrived to give him a beautiful procession as he was taken to the hospice. I hoped on some level Ryan knew how loved he was in that moment.

Then, in April 2022, just 22 days later, I sat at Ryan's bedside as he took his last breath. After months of sitting by Ryan's side, there was nothing I could say that he didn't already know. He knew I loved him and that he could go now. His lips curled into a small smile and then, he was gone. He was just 35.

Alone with my boys, I felt like I was drowning. Knowing Jackson would never sit on his dad's shoulders and Leo would never experience a daddy bear hug, killed me. That night, I took off my wedding ring, a tragic reminder of what I'd lost. I sat on the bed, flicking through photos and videos of Ryan. I sobbed as I found a video he'd taken of me the morning of the bee sting. 'The love of my life, there she goes…' he said to the camera. It was his last goodbye and 'I love you' to me. Hundreds of people turned up to his funeral. We remembered the Ryan we loved – the man who filled our house with singing, dancing, laughter and love.

I knew Ryan wouldn't want me wallowing in grief, I had to be strong for the boys. As the months passed, it was hard, but in time, as I built my confidence, I signed up to a dating website in June 2022. I received a message from a man called Anthony. I told him I was a widow with two young children and rather than being scared off, he was understanding. We began dating and Anthony was a natural with the boys. He'd play Lego with Jackson and help with Leo's night feeds. He was a keeper.

In February this year, Anthony and I were out on a walk when he dropped to one knee. 'Will you be my wife?' he asked. I said yes, jumping into his arms and crying with laughter and excitement. Now, after such tragedy, I'm happy again. I've shared my story on social media, and while most comments were supportive, a few people think I moved on too quickly. But I'm grateful to have found someone to walk through life with me and my sons. It feels like a gift from Ryan. I hate that I couldn't save him – I just hope he's at peace. I now work as a grief coach and to those struggling, I say don't give up on yourself, as there's another story waiting.

● *Follow Whitney's story on Instagram @whitneylynallen*

By Julia Sidwell

Dear Kate...

Counsellor Kate Medlin answers your personal, sexual and emotional problems

How can I help my daughter?

Q My ex left when our kids were six and eight and has had very little to do with them ever since. He didn't show up for any of their assemblies or parents' evenings and never gave me a penny. They are now adults and, although my son will have nothing to do with him, my daughter has always tried to stay in his good books. But his partner is so rude to her, and it's making her upset. The other night, she went round to see him, and his girlfriend made dinner without offering my daughter a thing. They just sat and ate in front of her. His partner screams and shouts at my daughter for no good reason, and my ex blames my daughter, and tells her 'You're just like your mother'. Then he tries to dig information from my daughter about her brother, because he doesn't like the fact that he's turned his back on him. She feels like he's more interested in him than in her. All of this is making her so upset and I don't know how to help her. I've tried talking to him, but he just doesn't get it. He thinks I've turned our son against him and am now trying to do the same with her.

A The best way you can help your daughter is by allowing her to have and express all the feelings that her relationship with her father stirs up for her. Unfortunately, so many of us are programmed to keep on returning to a well that offers no water. She is desperate to get some fatherly love from him, but time and again, she comes away empty handed. Children naturally believe that it's their fault if a parent doesn't show them love, and this is possibly why she keeps on trying. But this isn't her fault. It's not her who's failed. It's him. From the way you describe him, he seems like a pathetic creature who just wasn't man

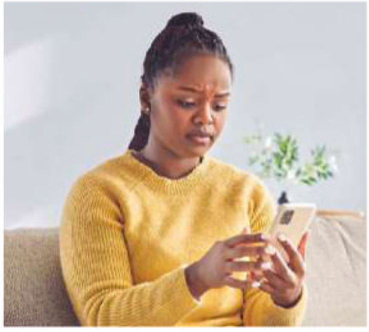
He never buys me a present!

Q My husband of 30 years never buys me a birthday present. I have to find something I like, order it and then it sits there waiting to be wrapped. This year, I am refusing to wrap my own present. He got the right hump and stormed out saying I was never happy. We have three grown-up children who would be more than willing to help him, but he refuses to ask them. His family never paid much attention to birthdays, he never had a birthday party as a kid. It makes me so angry that he's so stubborn about this one thing. He's usually a reasonable man and the rest of the time, we're just fine.

A In a way, you've answered your own question. I know it sounds daft, but that little boy who was never made a fuss of on his birthday, is incredibly envious of anyone who does. Even when we are all grown up, the parts of us that were hurt and let down by our family will always be there. It might be useful for you to try to see that little wounded boy, instead of the stubborn man who shows himself instead. If birthdays are what he finds difficult, perhaps you could work out how he could buy you a gift that wasn't birthday related. Just an 'I love you' gift. If he shows his love in other ways, perhaps you could forgive him this one difficulty and know that it isn't because he doesn't care.

My friends are not there for me

Q My dad died suddenly just before Christmas and it was the worst thing I've been through. My mum is really struggling, so I'm trying to support her, but I feel so let down by my friends. They came to the funeral and were there for me around the time it was all happening, but since then, I feel like they've all taken a massive step back. Do they think I'm supposed to be over it by now? They are just messaging me about everyday life stuff, and I just reply as normal. I don't want to bring them down, so I have to pretend to be fine. But I just wish they'd ask so I could tell them how I really feel.



A Your friends are responding to the version of you that you are showing them – someone who's fine and ready to get back to normal life. I imagine they know on some level that you are still in the depths of your grief, but perhaps they think you don't want to be reminded of it and they are following your lead. We teach people how to treat us, and if you want to talk about, cry, and grieve

Letters and replies may be edited for length/clarity. **Photos:** Shutterstock

Write to **Dear Kate**,
Bella, The Lantern,
75 Hampstead Road,
London, NW1 2PL, or email
bella.advice@bauermedia.co.uk.

Kate will attempt to respond to as many letters as possible through her page

enough to give his kids what a father should. He's one of those people who thinks that just having the title 'dad' means he should be loved and respected without having to put any effort in. She's gone without so much from him, and is trying to heal that wound, but is just pouring salt on it by hoping for something different. There's no point in you trying to convince him to change either. He won't hear you because he can't see what he's doing. All you can do is keep on telling her that the feelings she has about being treated this way are completely understandable. Don't talk badly about her dad and his partner, no matter how you truly feel about them, because this won't be helpful to her, and might even force her into feeling like she has to defend them. Just give her the space to talk to you about how she's feeling and offer her all the love she needs from you.

---

with your friends, then let them in. Let them know that you're not OK, and you do need them to check in on you. Some will show up, some might find it hard. All you can do is let them know what you need.

BELLA ADVICE LINES

Do you suffer from anxiety?
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Calls cost 65p per minute plus your network access charge. Calls last approximately four minutes. You must be over 18 to call and have the bill payer's permission. UK SP: Spoke 0333 202 3390

Horoscopes

By Jane Struthers **For the week 4–10 February**

PISCES
20 February – 20 March

Some modest indulgences and treats are the perfect way to cheer yourself up at the moment. They don't have to break the bank and on the 7th you're reminded that some things in life are much more valuable to you than pounds and pence.

Theme of the week: Reticence

☎ 0906 650 7241

ARIES
21 March – 20 April

You exude charm and charisma this week, so put them to good use whenever possible. The 7th is the perfect example of how a little diplomacy and affection can create a deep and emotionally sustaining atmosphere.

Theme of the week: Home turf

☎ 0906 650 7230

TAURUS
21 April – 21 May

At times this week you'll want to protect yourself from anyone who's an emotional blunderbuss. On the 10th there's a clash between convention and breaking the rules. It will lead to stalemate unless you can find an inventive way to break the deadlock.

Theme of the week: Obstinacy

☎ 0906 650 7231

GEMINI
22 May – 21 June

Nurture and cherish your friendships over the next few weeks if you want them to blossom. Why not start midweek by making contact with someone you haven't seen for a while? Adopting a positive attitude boosts your mood on the 9th.

Theme of the week: Kindred spirits

☎ 0906 650 7232

CANCER
22 June – 23 July

The 9th is ideal for discussing whatever is on your mind, particularly if you have financial questions that need answers. Take care on the 10th when subtle undercurrents of possessiveness threaten to rock the boat with you-know-who.

Theme of the week: Give and take

☎ 0906 650 7233

LEO
24 July – 23 August

You might respect someone, but you don't see eye to eye with them at the start of the week. There are topics you need to get off your chest. Let the dust settle first, and then initiate a calm and reasoned discussion on the 9th.

Theme of the week: Tolerance

☎ 0906 650 7234

VIRGO
24 August – 23 September

Your innate Virgoan sense of duty is still highlighted. It's just what you need when it comes to tackling your current workload, but you must also allow yourself some time off to recover. Stay alert on the 8th to avoid confusion with a certain someone.

Theme of the week: Intimacy

☎ 0906 650 7235

Holly Willoughby – 44 on 10 February

AQUARIUS
21 January – 19 February

You're making quite an impact, thanks to your current magnetism, which comes in handy on the 8th if you're dealing with someone who can be hard work at the best of times. On the 10th your quick thinking and intelligence help to solve a domestic or family problem.

Theme of the week: Pizazz

☎ 0906 650 7240

LIBRA
24 September – 23 October

From the start of the week you're even keener than usual to keep others happy, which may mean letting them have their own way. However, you must guard against giving the impression that your needs don't count, because they definitely do!

Theme of the week: Love and affection

☎ 0906 650 7236

SCORPIO
24 October – 22 November

Try not to let little niggles loom too large at the start of the week. It's important to keep them in their proper perspective. The 7th is good for exploring your emotions, whether you're mulling them over alone or discussing them with someone who understands.

Theme of the week: Courage

☎ 0906 650 7237

SAGITTARIUS
23 November – 21 December

You thrive whenever you're with someone you love, which gives you some great excuses for enjoyable get-togethers. On the 8th you excel at tuning into other people's moods, provided that you don't start imagining what isn't there.

Theme of the week: Easy does it

☎ 0906 650 7238

CAPRICORN
22 December – 20 January

You're starting to yearn for whatever feels safe and familiar, whether that's people or places. This will help you to reconnect with some deeply comforting memories. A little effort brings big results on the 9th, when you're effective and productive.

Theme of the week: Togetherness

☎ 0906 650 7239

For a more detailed weekly forecast call the number for your star sign. Calls cost 65p per minute plus your network access charge. Weekly forecasts last approximately four minutes. Messages are pre-recorded. For entertainment and guidance purposes only. Users must be over 18. Service provider: Spoke. Customer service number 0333 202 3390 (9am-5pm).

Luxuri
beach bre

Sandy beaches, crysta
and sunshine… wha
you want on a lo

Adult-only getaway, Mauritius

Embark on a long-haul venture to Mauritius and fly direct to the eastern coast of Africa to explore lush landscapes and immaculate white beaches.

The 800-metre high mountains and forests in the island's interior are home to some of the world's rarest animals – you can spot geckos and tropical birds in Poste Lafayette National Park. The island is also surrounded by one of the largest unbroken barrier reefs in the world, so the scuba diving opportunities are on a par with the Maldives.

- **Stay at the adults-only Veranda Paul & Virginie from £1156pp for seven-nights, all-inclusive, flying from Heathrow in March 2025 with britishairways.com**

Flamenco Beach is known for its stunning clear waters

Totally tropical Puerto Rico

Looking to ditch the morning frost and soak up some rays? Head to the Caribbean for a dose of vitamin D. Nicknamed the 'Island of Enchantment', Puerto Rico is a tropical paradise, bursting with natural beauty.

In Culebra, head to Flamenco Beach, known for its crystal blue waters lined with miles of white sand. Switch the beach for the colourful capital of San Juan where you can explore the Castillo San Felipe del Morro, a 16th-century fort built on a cliff overlooking the ocean.

- **Stay at the Conrad San Juan Condado Plaza Hotel, from £1159pp for seven nights, room only, flying from London Heathrow in February 2025 with travelbag.co.uk**

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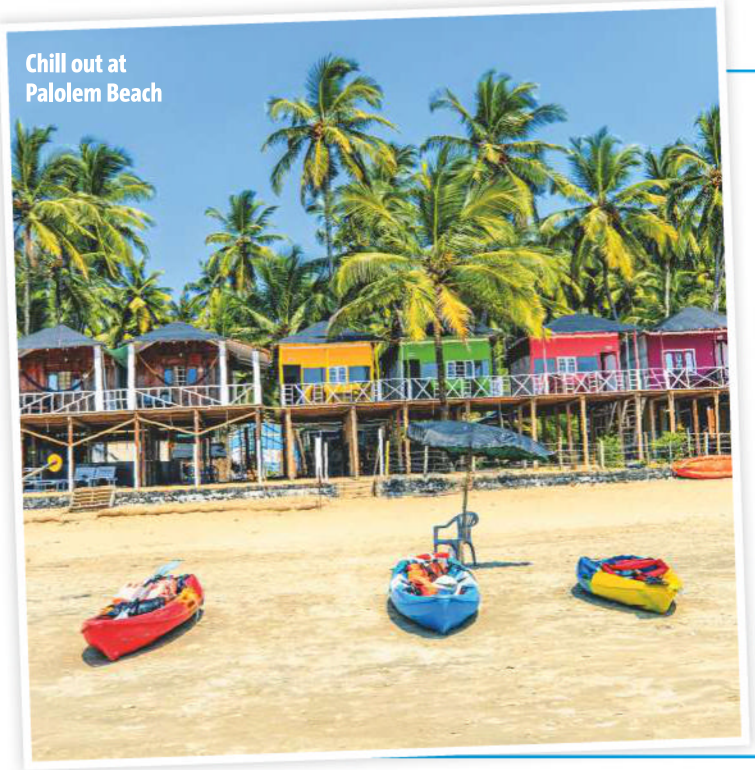
ng-haul trip?

Take in the awe-inspiring landscape of Mauritius



Chill out at Palolem Beach

Gorgeous Goa

This western part of India has a European feel with old churches, unique culture and a stretch of beautiful coast that looks over the Arabian Sea.

Baga Beach is one of Goa's most popular, with beach shacks and vibrant nightlife, while Palolem Beach offers a more laid-back retreat and a stunning view – ideal if you want to escape from the bustle of the busier resorts.

Away from the beaches, Anjuna Flea Market has handicrafts and souvenirs, or Dudhsagar Falls is one of India's tallest with a four-tier cascade.

- **Stay at the Resort Lagoa Azul for seven nights, bed and breakfast, from £986pp, departing Manchester airport in January 2025 with tui.co.uk**

The sunshine state, Florida

It's not all rollercoasters and Mickey Mouse in Florida. Pensacola is a hidden gem; a thriving coastal city along the Gulf Coast in Northwest Florida that offers a perfect blend of stunning beaches, rich history and fabulous culture. It has two islands – Pensacola Beach and Perdido Key – which are the ideal setting for beach time, swimming or water sports, such as paddleboarding, kayaking and snorkelling.

For culture vultures, America's First Settlement Trail is a must. Local cuisine is a hot mix of Cajun spice and home cooked southern soul food that will tantalise your taste buds.

- **Stay at the Pensacola Beach Resort, from £1399pp for seven nights, room only, flying from Heathrow in February 2025, with haystravel.co.uk**

Perfect for families

Go wildlife spotting at sunset

Explore exotic Sri Lanka

Sea turtles, river safaris, Buddhist temples and beautiful gardens await you on a long-haul beach holiday to Sri Lanka. This 11-night escape to Kalutara Beach, staying at the Tangerine Beach Hotel, ensures you get to experience the local culture while relaxing and enjoying the laid-back lifestyle on offer against a backdrop of palm trees and blue skies.

The bespoke itinerary includes visits to a bustling fish market and cooking demonstrations, the beauty of the Kalutara Temple, and a lazy river cruise on the Madu River, searching for exotic wildlife.

- **An 11-night all-inclusive holiday starts from £1499pp, including transfers, excursions and return flights from Gatwick in May 2025, with justgoholidays.com**

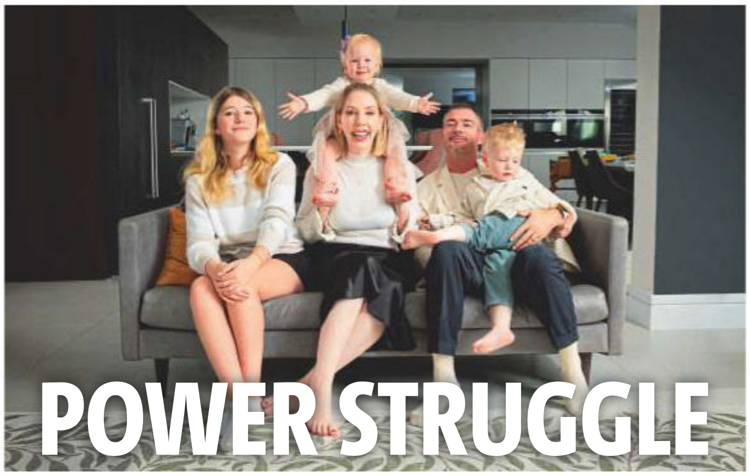
By Zoe Bishop. **Pictures:** Shutterstock

TV WEEK

Hidden truths

Unforgotten, Sunday 9 February, ITV

Sanjeev Bhaskar and Sinéad Keenan return as DCI Jess James and DI Sunil 'Sunny' Khan as the sixth series of *Unforgotten* kicks off. They continue to delve into unresolved crimes and expose long-buried secrets as they find justice for victims. A host of new faces join the cast including Victoria Hamilton and MyAnna Buring as well as some old favourites. When suspected human remains are uncovered on Whitney Marsh, Jess and Sunny are called to the scene, abandoning their evening plans. It transpires the remains are recent and the body was placed there already dismembered...



POWER STRUGGLE

At Home with Katherine Ryan, Monday 10 February, UKTV

Dealing with two tiny kids and a big one facing the pressure of exams as she begins a 10-month comedy tour, Katherine Ryan is finding family life more exhausting than ever. Husband Bobby will be at the helm at home but only after marriage coaching to help the couple stay connected and hopefully give Katherine some faith in her husband's abilities. She's also keen to send her daughter to rehab for a phone addiction but breaks down when confronted by the truth behind her inability to let go of leading the family and handing over any power.

Comedy superhero

Extraordinary, streaming now on Disney+ and coming soon to ITVX

We catch up with Jen (Máiréad Tyers), a woman without powers living in a world where everyone else develops superpowers when they become an adult, in the second series of *Extraordinary*. We join her finding out that determining her power at the specialist clinic isn't as easy as she'd hoped, and the rest of her life isn't smooth sailing either. Siobhán McSweeney returns as Jen's mum Mary and Máiréad admits it was hard to keep a straight-face on set. '[Siobhan] just plays an Irish mammy so brilliantly, she's a comedy genius. There were many times when we were trying not to laugh on set.'

By Caroline Blight, Amber Connolly and Amy Rowland

Clueless Claudia

One Question, Friday 14 February, Channel 4

Claudia Winkleman is back with one general knowledge question which, if answered correctly, will win a pair of contestants £100k. She loves the simple format but finds it hard not to help when the pressure is on. 'I really want to help them,' says Claudia. 'But that's why they don't give me the questions, and certainly not the answers, before we're in the studio. No one trusts me. When we did one of the run-throughs and I knew the answer, the bosses were like, "Stop winking and making strange noises."'

NEW DETECTIVE

Virdee, Monday 10 February, BBC1

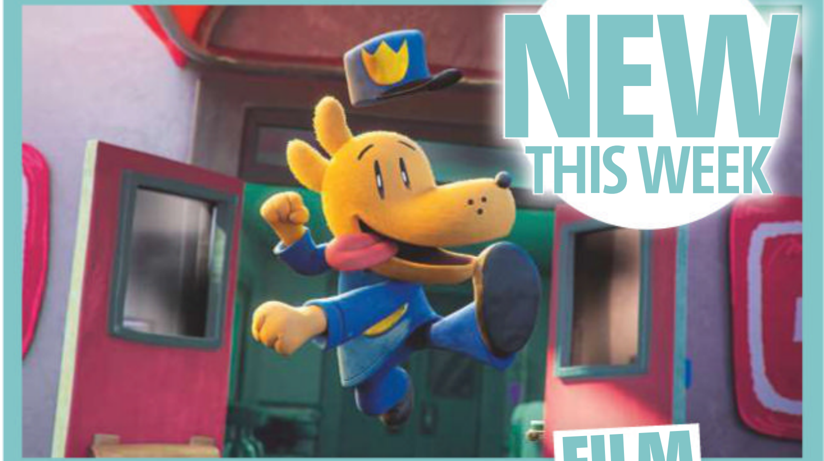
Crime thriller lovers rejoice as we have a new TV detective in town. From the pages of A A Dhand's novels, Detective Harry Virdee (Staz Nair) is a Bradford cop disowned by his Sikh family for marrying Saima (Aysha Kala), who is Muslim. With his personal life already in chaos, Virdee must hunt down a killer targeting the Asian community. He soon realises he needs the help of his brother-in-law Riaz, a drugs kingpin who runs the largest cartel in the county. But forming an alliance could ruin them both, so Virdee has to decide whether his loyalties lie with himself and his family or his job.

LIFE LAUGHS

Big Boys, Sunday 9 February, Channel 4

In series three of comedy-drama *Big Boys* we join the gang in the second year of Brent University where, alongside dealing with virginity hang-ups, drug experimentation and Jack's obsession with Alison Hammond, their degrees actually count! Jack's family continue to navigate their lives after his dad's passing, beginning just as much of a new chapter as the university students. Jack Rooke, creator, writer and narrator, says we are in for a treat. 'It's even dafter, sillier and bigger than before – a dream come true!'

NEW THIS WEEK



FILM

Dog Man

When a police officer and his faithful police dog get injured in the line of duty, a life-saving surgery fuses the two of them together. Welcome, Dog Man. While learning to embrace his new identity, Dog Man is sworn to protect and serve, which includes stopping feline supervillain Petey the Cat from cloning himself and going on a crime spree. Great family fun.

PODCAST

THE LOUIS THEROUX PODCAST

The Louis Theroux Podcast

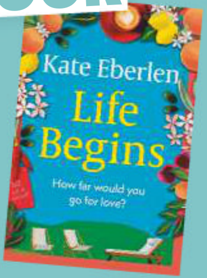
Our favourite documentarian is back for a new series of his award-winning podcast. Each week, Louis invites a celebrity guest to the mic for in-depth conversations about the hard-hitting topics fans really want to know. The famous faces in this latest run include the likes of Willem Dafoe, Jade Thirlwall, Armie Hammer and many more.

BOOK

Life Begins

by Kate Eberlen (Orion)

Jessica and Robin have been best friends since university, but only she knows she's in love with him. For his 40th, she plans a surprise trip to Italy for some friends. Actor Robin basks in the attention, but as tensions rise and desires clash during the getaway, he questions if turning 40 might actually be the start of something new... A brilliant, emotional relationship drama set in the Italian countryside.



BOOK

ISLAND SONG
PEPSI DEMACQUE-CROCKETT

Island Song

by Pepsi Demacque-Crockett (Harper Collins)

When their father dies, Agnes Deterville and her sister Ella must forge their own paths in life. Headstrong Agnes dreams of a new life far away. Cautious Ella fears the world beyond their small village in St Lucia. When Agnes departs for a new life in '50s London, they are both confronted by heartbreak, loneliness and tragedy. Can the sisters keep their island song singing in their hearts? A stunning read.

BOOK

The Island Getaway

by Lucy Diamond (Quercus)

On the sun-drenched island of Kefalonia, The Ionian Escape hotel welcomes guests seeking solace – but who are carrying a lot of baggage. Disgraced TV star Miranda Vallance's job is on the line. 82-year-old Evelyn Chambers faces fulfilling a heartfelt promise to her lost love and celebrity chef Frank Neale's arrival stirs gossip, yet it's his wife, Leonora, who may truly need a getaway... The perfect escapist read.

The Island Getaway
Lucy Diamond

'I would be a teen

Kym Marsh reveals all about the latest *Waterloo Road* drama

Life is no easier at Waterloo Road for the staff and students as term kicks off. A new headteacher Dame Stella Drake (Lindsey Coulson) is at the helm and hoping to shake off their infamous 'murder school' reputation. Drake joins as the students become increasingly unruly and her methods can sometimes ruffle feathers as it pushes against the school's modern pastoral approach.

One of those finding it hard to accept the new tough line is Tonya Walters (Summer Violet Bird) – who is struggling with the pain of endometriosis, but isn't being given any special treatment by the Head. Her mother Nicky (Kym Marsh) has finally realised how much her daughter is suffering and is shocked Drake seems unable to empathise with such a female issue. We caught up with Kym, 48, to find out more.

We see Tonya really at breaking point with the pain she is experiencing because of her undiagnosed endometriosis – how does Nicky react when the Head is so flippant about it?
I think she finds that quite surprising. Here's a woman not recognising a woman's problem. You could argue that Nicky hasn't always been great, but eventually, she did come to realise that actually Tonya wasn't very well and is trying to get to the bottom of things. Young girls in particular often aren't listened to by GPs, they're often dismissed by their family members. A lot of girls are going through that struggle to get a diagnosis, and they reach rock-bottom before something actually happens.

How have viewers reacted to this ongoing storyline?
This show is brilliant, because we are there to entertain people, but actually when we hit issues like this one, it really does get people talking and raises subjects. No one talks about endometriosis. No one wants to discuss it. Certainly not in young women. And I think it raises that kind of awareness, and it does get people chatting more. During the last series, when we were talking about endometriosis and the whole thing went out on social media, it went absolutely bonkers on Instagram because there were so many people going, 'That's happened to me,' or 'That's happening to me,' or 'I didn't get diagnosed till I was 30.' You realise, actually, how many women are suffering from this, and are either undiagnosed, or get a late diagnosis. It's such a big subject. Summer has done a fantastic job! I'm proud of my girl.

n't want to ager today!'

With her real-life daughter Emilie

Kym is proud of her co-star Summer

Would you want to be a teen today?
Absolutely not! I always say this to everyone. I have a teenage daughter [Kym is mum to Polly, 13, from her previous marriage to Jamie Lomas, as well as David, 29, and Emilie, 28, from an earlier relationship]. She's almost 14, going on about 25! But the way I look at the years now, I would not want to grow up in this era. I was happy in the '80s, riding my BMX, and just being oblivious to stuff. I think now kids are so exposed to things that, really, I don't think they need to be exposed to. It's harder as they are almost forced to grow up quicker.

Because of social media?
I think social media is a weird and wonderful place, all rolled into one. It can be so brilliant and fun and give you loads of access to things that are great. But there's also this other side to it that's just so dark and not necessary. It's not a world I would like to grow up in.

***Waterloo Road* is one of many jobs that you do. How do you juggle it all?**
I'm actually a robot! I do get asked that question quite a lot, and a lot of the time it's my mum telling me to sit down and just put my feet up for a minute. I love my job. I love what I do. I love that I've been given so many opportunities to do different things and work in different areas of the entertainment industry. That doesn't happen all the time. There will come a day where I stop getting offered jobs, so I'm going to take the jobs! I like playing different characters and I love being on stage. I love being on camera. The thing I find the hardest is presenting because I have to be myself! I find it very hard to be myself on-screen – I have to act at being a TV presenter. I think the one thing my dad always taught me was work ethic. And I'm definitely not work-shy. No one could ever accuse me of being lazy!

Presenting on *The Weekend Travel Show* with Richard Arnold

***Waterloo Road* is going to be 20 years old next year. What do you think keeps it so fresh and engaging?**
It's so current and the storylines are always relevant. It's fun, but it also tackles some serious subjects – and they're done so well. There are so many different elements to the series, there's something for everyone. I think the writing is incredible and the cast all get on very, very well. I'm sure it comes across on-screen that the cast are very close, we're a great crew. It's a great family to be a part of.

● *Waterloo Road, Tuesday 11 February, BBC1*

By Tom Spilsbury. **Pictures** BBC, Shutterstock

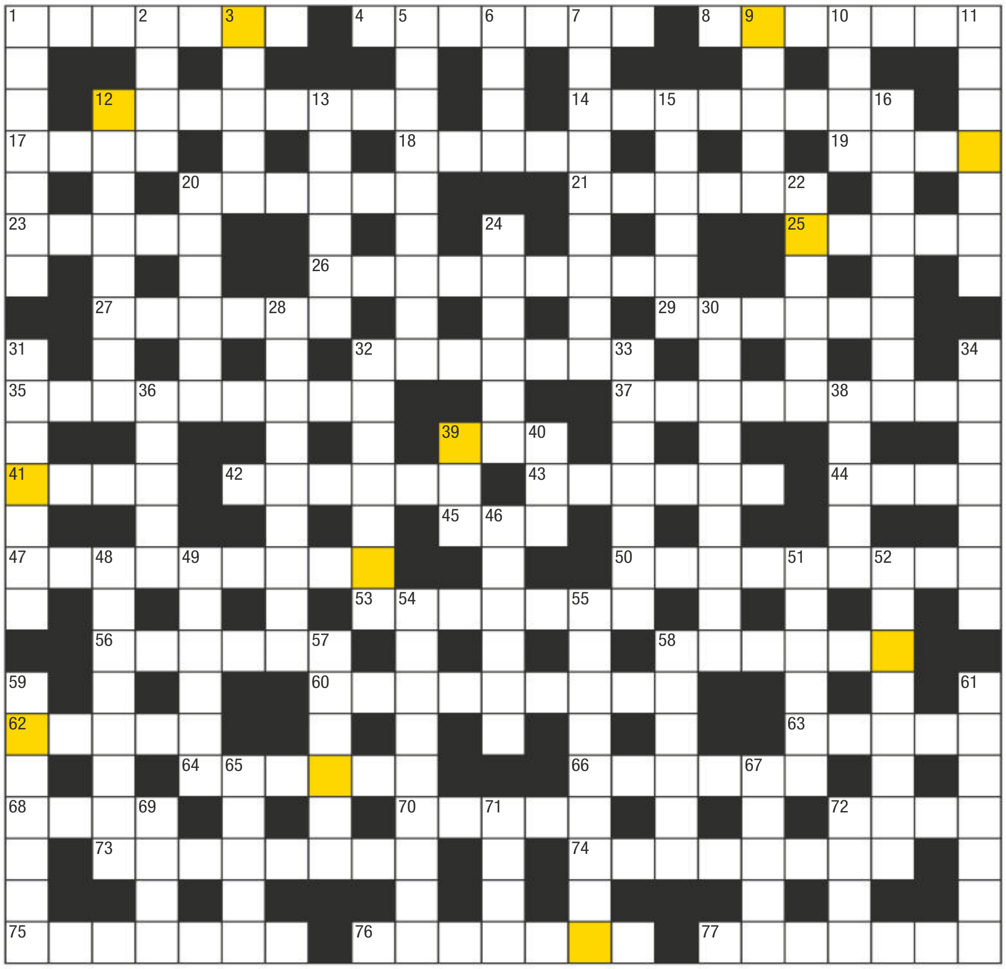
Puzzles

YOU could be in with a chance of winning £200

PRIZE crossword

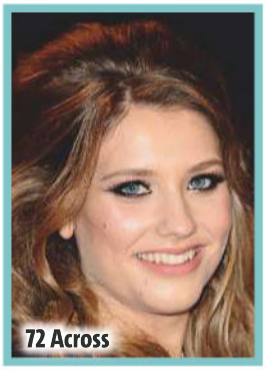
WIN £200

Solve the crossword to find, reading from top to bottom in the shaded squares, the name of a US actor. This is your competition entry answer. See the 'How to enter' panel, below right.



Across

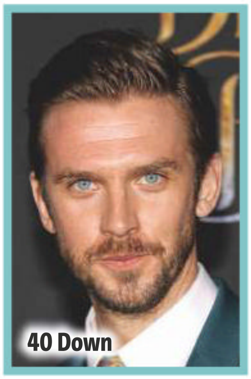
1 Gift (7)
4 Lacquer (7)
8 Taxi (7)
12 Flowering climber (8)
14 J M Barrie's boy who never grew up (5,3)
17 Pepper's partner? (4)
18 Edition, or distribute (5)
19 --- Wahlberg, star of *Uncharted* and *Arthur The King* (4)
20 Morticia and Gomez plus the rest of the spooky gang, the --- Family (6)
21 Burger sauce? (6)



23 Tree with pods used as a chocolate substitute (5)
25 Musical, *The Phantom Of The* --- (5)
26 Egyptian village that was the scene of a decisive Allied victory in 1942 (2,7)
27 US five-cent piece (6)
29 Mexican dish prepared in a corn husk, anagram of LA MEAT (6)
32 Blue-veined cheese (7)
35 Failure to notice an error (9)
37 Penthouse flat? (9)
39 Fleeting craze (3)
41 Greek pastry in thin sheets (4)
42 Hugh ---, star of *The Night Manager* (6)
43 Inflatable mattress (3,3)
44 Bog fuel (4)
45 Branch of Buddhism (3)
47 Figurine such as an Oscar, eg (9)
50 Apiarist (9)
53 Italian filled pasta parcels (7)
56 Sci-fi sequel which saw Sigourney Weaver reprise her role as Ellen Ripley (6)
58 *Dracula* creator, Bram --- (6)
60 Quality, trait (9)
62 Saying, maxim (5)
63 Augusta's state (5)
64 Member of a Native American people of the southwest US (6)
66 Tom Hanks movie, --- *13* (6)
68 Train track (4)
70 Scottish landowner (5)
72 --- Henderson, singer, pictured above left (4)
73 South American cattle farm worker, anagram of HER ACORN (8)
74 Short-lived BBC soap centred around wealthy expats in Spain (8)
75 Stateliness (7)
76 Hurricane, typhoon (7)
77 Journey to work (7)

Down

1 Science subject (7)
2 Sediment on a riverbed (4)
3 Wandering tribesperson (5)
5 Helper (9)
6 Panel show, *Have I Got --- For You* (4)
7 Black Panther or Spider-Man, eg (9)
9 Knuckles in *Sonic The Hedgehog 3*, --- Elba (5)
10 Muslim prayer leader (4)
11 Keira Knightley film, *Bend It Like* --- (7)
12 Royal residence in London, --- House (8)
13 Tall prickly plant with purple flower heads (6)
15 Reality TV comp, *Britain's Got* --- (6)
16 Unassisted vision (5,3)
20 Counting frame (6)
22 Tasmania's capital (6)
24 Spanish rice dish (6)
28 Test cricket ground in Birmingham (9)
30 Surprise, wonder (9)
31 Spiny ---, species of shark sometimes served down the chippy (7)
32 Meal's first course (7)
33 Kenya's main city (7)
34 Standing, or height (7)
36 Bird's perch (5)
38 Leaf on the flag of Canada (5)
39 Tommy Cooper's hat? (3)
40 --- Stevens, star of *Beauty And The Beast*, pictured below right (3)
46 Magical potion (6)
48 Slaughterhouse (8)
49 Together, in --- (6)
51 --- roll, canoeing move (6)
52 Michael ---, former MP turned TV travel presenter (8)
54 Study of star signs (9)
55 *Jurassic Park* actress (5,4)
57 Vicious, brutal (6)
58 Silver medal position (6)
59 Green gemstone (7)
61 For that reason (7)
65 Royal racecourse? (5)
67 Film with Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, *Key* --- (5)
69 Garden grass (4)
71 *White Wedding* rocker, Billy --- (4)
72 Dutch cheese (4)



Crossword Neil Locker. **Pictures** Shutterstock

COMPETITION AND GIVEAWAY RULES Competitions open to residents of the UK (including Channel Islands and the Isle of Man), Eire or BFPOs, aged 18 or over, except Bauer Media employees, its affiliated companies, any promotional partners, or their families and anyone connected with the competitions. Enter by text, online or phone. No purchase necessary. Answers must be the product of own work. Unless expressly stated, travel expenses and spending money is not included. There is no cash alternative to prizes and no alternative holidays can be offered. Prizes are not transferable. No responsibility can be accepted for entries that are delayed, damaged, mislaid or wrongly delivered, or for any loss in service of the online entry mechanism or for entries lost, delayed or corrupted due to computer error in transit. Only one entry per person. A winning entry is the first correct answer drawn after the closing date. For a free entry, enter online at bellamagazine.co.uk. Prizewinners will be notified by post on headed paper or by official email. The results are published. Winners must agree to the publication of their names, age and photos. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. Your information will only be used to administer promotions in accordance with our privacy policy. Entry implies acceptance of these rules. Promoter: H Bauer Publishing. Full T&Cs can be found at bauerlegal.co.uk/competition-terms.html

Sudoku

Fill in the blank squares with the numbers 1 to 9 so that each row, each column and each smaller 3x3 block contains all the numbers from 1 to 9.

EASY

1	2						5	7
	8		9		6		2	
		6				9		
	1		4		9		3	
			7	6	3			
	7		1		5		6	
		8				5		
	6		5		8		4	
7	4						1	8

HARD

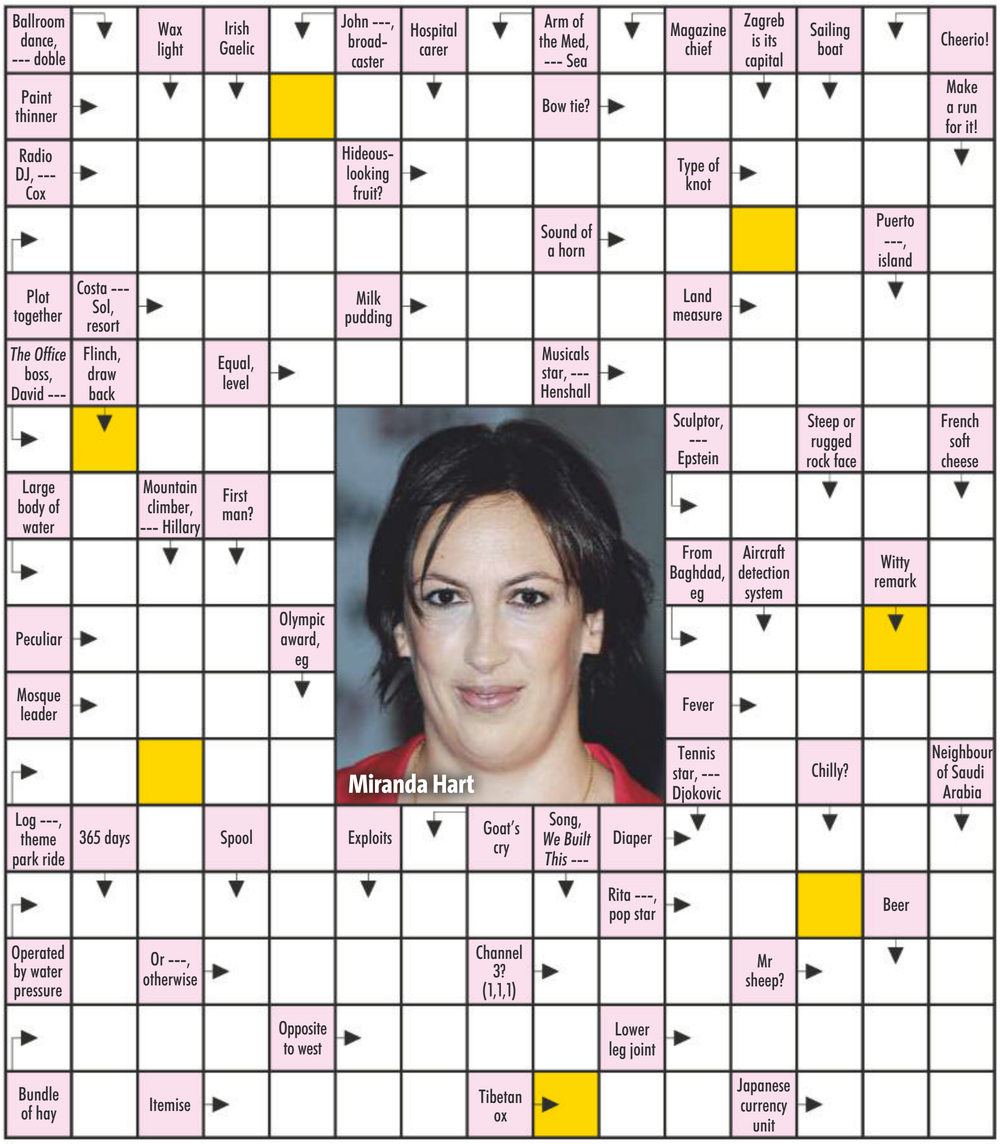
		7					5	1
		5					2	7
9				3				
6					9			
	2		4		1		8	
			7					4
				1				5
1	9					8		
5	3					2		

Take A Break Su-doku magazine, containing over 80 fun-to-solve puzzles, is on sale now.

PRIZE Arrowword

WIN £200

Solve the clues, writing your answers in the directions shown by the arrows, to reveal, reading down the shaded squares, the name of the English resort town where Miranda Hart was born. This is your competition entry answer. See the 'How to enter' panel below.


Ballroom dance, --- doble
Wax light
Irish Gaelic
John ---, broadcaster
Hospital carer
Arm of the Med, --- Sea
Magazine chief
Zagreb is its capital
Sailing boat
Cheerio!
Paint thinner
Bow tie?
Make a run for it!
Radio DJ, --- Cox
Hideous-looking fruit?
Type of knot
Sound of a horn
Puerto ---, island
Plot together
Costa --- Sol, resort
Milk pudding
Land measure
The Office boss, David ---
Flinch, draw back
Equal, level
Musicals star, --- Henshall
Sculptor, --- Epstein
Steep or rugged rock face
French soft cheese
Large body of water
Mountain climber, --- Hillary
First man?
From Baghdad, eg
Aircraft detection system
Witty remark
Peculiar
Olympic award, eg
Mosque leader
Fever
Miranda Hart
Tennis star, --- Djokovic
Chilly?
Neighbour of Saudi Arabia
Log ---, theme park ride
365 days
Spool
Exploits
Goat's cry
Song, *We Built This ---*
Diaper
Rita ---, pop star
Beer
Operated by water pressure
Or ---, otherwise
Channel 3? (1,1,1)
Mr sheep?
Opposite to west
Lower leg joint
Bundle of hay
Itemise
Tibetan ox
Japanese currency unit

SOLUTIONS

Sudoku solutions can be found online now at bellamagazine.co.uk

ISSUE 3
PRIZE ANSWERS
Crossword
Channing Tatum
Arrowword
South Africa

Full solutions to this week's prize puzzles can be found at bellamagazine.co.uk after the closing date: 17 February 2025

HOW TO ENTER THE PRIZE COMPETITIONS

BY PHONE: 0901 130 0237

When asked for the issue number, key in 05. Calls cost 50p per call, plus your network access charge. (UK readers only.) You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission.

BY TEXT: 65115

Text BEL05 then a space followed by your name, house number or name, your postcode, then your answer(s), all separated by a space, to 65115, eg Jane Smith 10 SL5 9JN Answer(s). Texts cost 50p plus your standard network rate. Keep texts under 160 characters or you may be charged for more than one text.

- If you enter after the closing date, you will not be entered but may be charged. Not available in Eire. Please ensure your entry is completed correctly, as incorrect entries may be charged but not entered. This is not a subscription service.
- **You are automatically consenting to receive further communications about these competitions from us via SMS text. You can opt out of this at any time by texting STOP to 65115.** This will be charged at your standard network rate, but you will need to do this each time you enter the competition by text. Your personal data will (regardless of whether you opt out) always be used to process your entry. For further information, see general terms and privacy policy at Bauerdatapromise.co.uk.
- Lines close at 11.59pm on 17 February 2025.

Phone UK SP: Spoke (0333 202 3390). Text SP: Bauer Media. Email smshelp@bauermedia.co.uk or call 0330 159 2525.

OR ENTER ONLINE:

Bellamagazine.co.uk

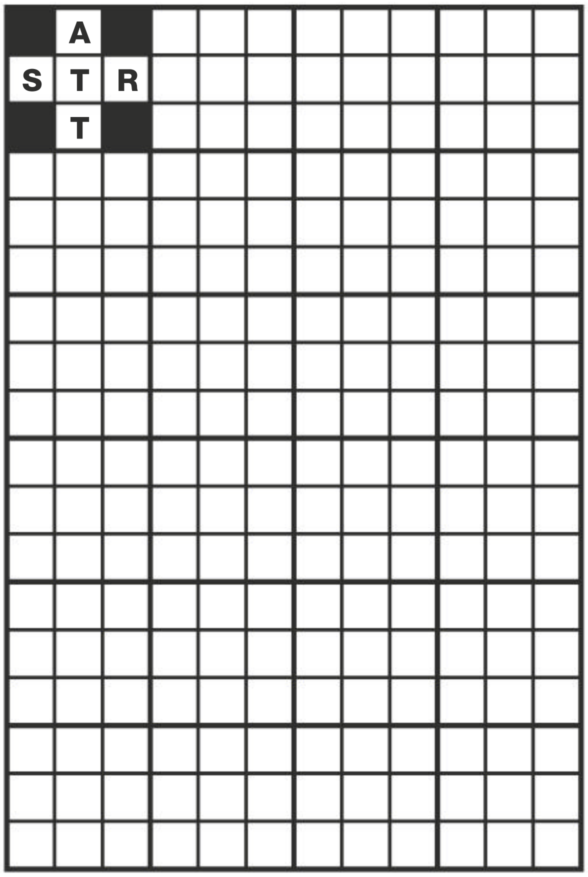
For full solutions and winners' details, visit bellamagazine.co.uk

Continued over the page...

Puzzles contin

BITS & PIECES

We've taken a completed crossword puzzle and cut it up to give 24 pieces. Your task is to rebuild the puzzle with the help of the piece that we've already placed in the grid.



G	■	G
H	O	O
■	V	■

■	■	C
A	V	E
■	A	■

N	O	B
E	■	I
D	E	T

G	■	F
I	S	T
■	I	■

T	■	O
C	O	M
H	■	E

T	U	S
L	■	S
E	F	■

B	■	G
O	L	L
T	■	A

C	A	C
■	C	■
C	H	I

■	T	■
T	Y	P
O	■	A

~~

■	A	■
S	✗	R
■	T	■

~~

■	L	I
N	■	N
O	R	C

C	E	D
O	■	R
R	■	I

P	■	S
I	■	T
C	H	E

W	E	D
E	■	I
I	G	N

W	E	E
■	R	■
E	T	A

■	L	■
R	A	G
■	K	■

O	D	Y
■	E	■
A	C	H

■	E	■
O	L	O
W	■	R

L	A	N
■	N	■
N	G	E

L	A	C
■	N	■
H	I	D

B	R	E
■	I	■
D	E	S

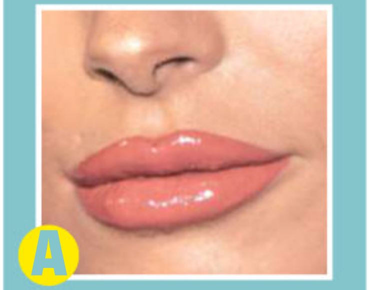
■	M	■
B	A	T
■	L	■

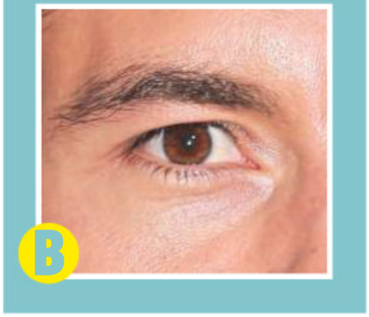
■	A	■
O	R	E
W	■	■

■	X	■
M	P	L
■	E	■

GUESS THE CELEB

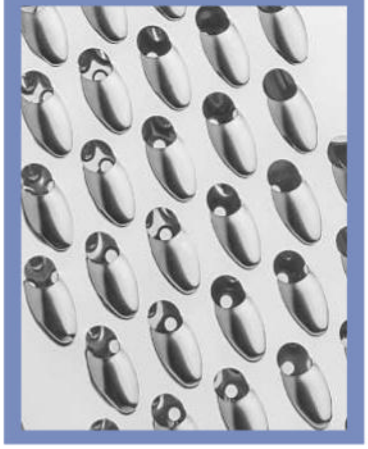
Can you name these stars by seeing close ups of their famous faces?





WHAT ON EARTH?

Can you guess what everyday object this super zoomed in photo shows?



ued...

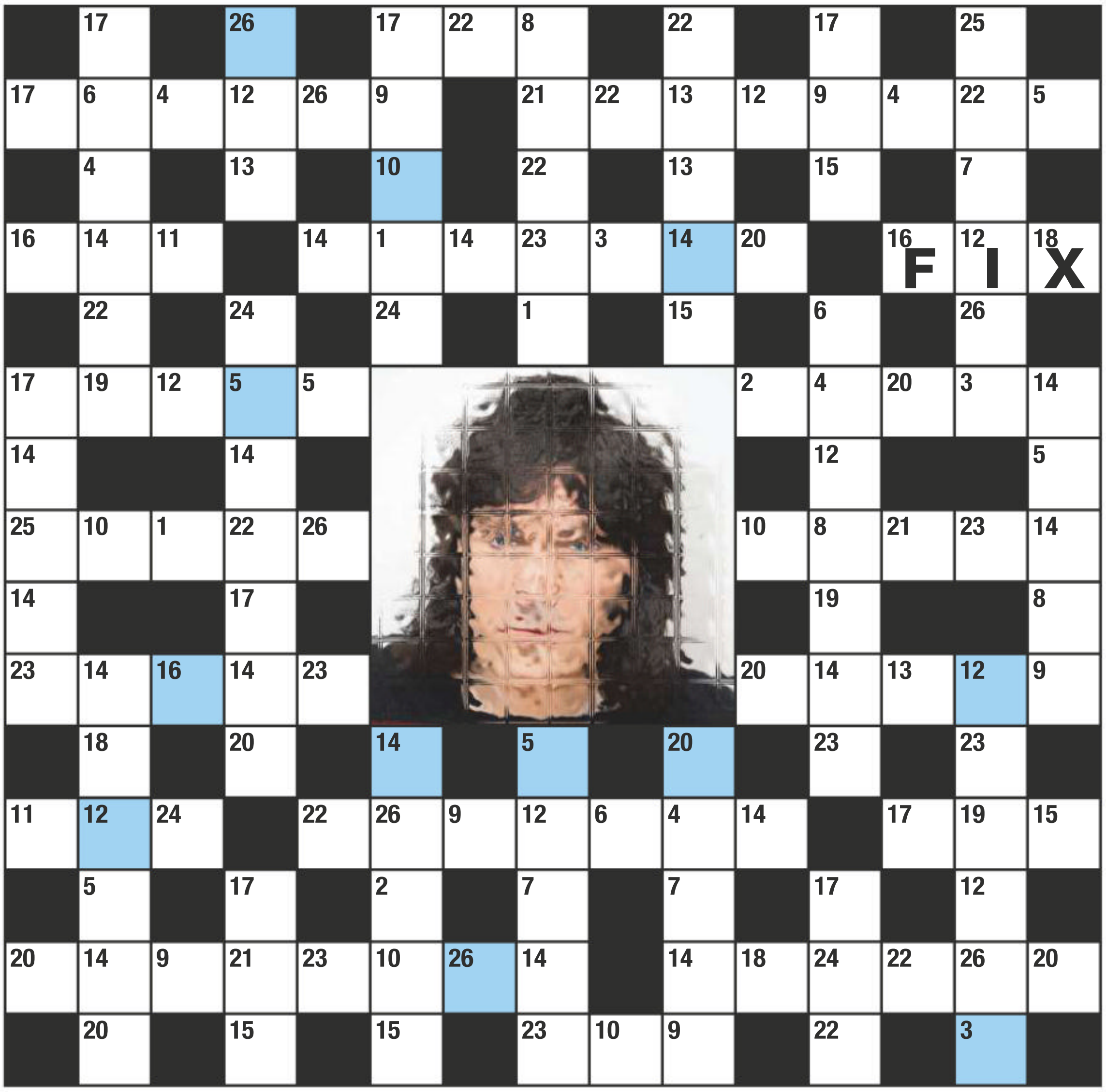
ROUND SUM

Work out the solution to the sum by following the instructions contained within the arrow.

40
HALVE IT
x7
÷4
DOUBLE IT
-24
+13
-19
÷10
x5
☐

CODEBREAKER

When you've solved this codebreaker, the identity of our disguised celebrity will be revealed in the shaded squares. Then, the same code will help you complete the lower grid and read a mystery fact about them.



■	17	■	26	■	17	22	8	■	22	■	17	■	25	■
17	6	4	12	26	9	■	21	22	13	12	9	4	22	5
■	4	■	13	■	10	■	22	■	13	■	15	■	7	■
16	14	11	■	14	1	14	23	3	14	20	■	16 F	12 I	18 X
■	22	■	24	■	24	■	1	■	15	■	6	■	26	■
17	19	12	5	5						2	4	20	3	14
14	■	■	14	■						■	12	■	■	5
25	10	1	22	26						10	8	21	23	14
14	■	■	17	■						■	19	■	■	8
23	14	16	14	23						20	14	13	12	9
■	18	■	20	■	14	■	5	■	20	■	23	■	23	■
11	12	24	■	22	26	9	12	6	4	14	■	17	19	15
■	5	■	17	■	2	■	7	■	7	■	17	■	12	■
20	14	9	21	23	10	26	14	■	14	18	24	22	26	20
■	20	■	15	■	15	■	23	10	9	■	22	■	3	■

A B C D E ~~F~~ G H ~~I~~ J
K L M N O P Q R S
T U V W ~~X~~ Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
											I	

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
		F		X								

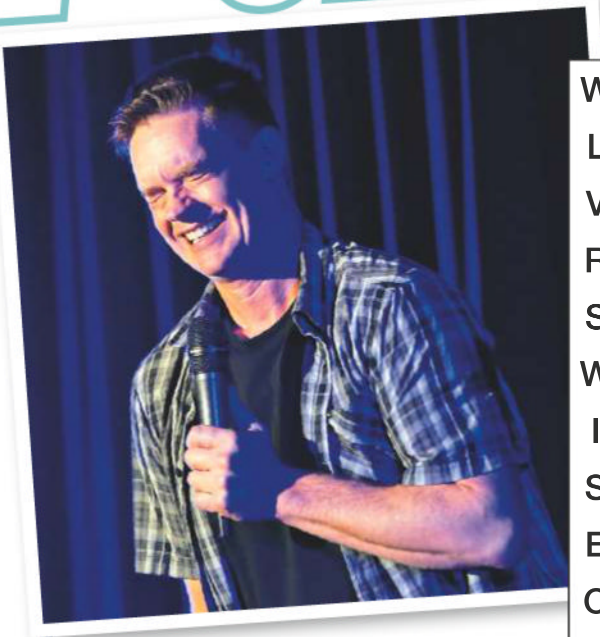
17 22 8 19 14 20 ■ 10 26 ■ 21 12 17 ■ 16 12 23 17 9 ■ 20 22 15

25 10 23 19 12 26 3 ■ 12 26 ■ 22 ■ 8 22 19 14 ■ 17 21 10 24

Pictures Shutterstock

Continued over the page...

Puzzles contin



SEND IN THE CLOWNS

Here's a puzzle about telling jokes – make sure it isn't a comedy of errors!

W	B	A	D	L	A	N	G	U	A	G	E	N	J	G	R	M	H	Q
L	S	B	R	P	K	G	Y	D	A	N	E	O	N	N	R	J	O	C
V	R	A	O	S	X	E	F	I	I	N	C	I	Z	T	O	I	H	R
R	O	L	L	E	U	M	C	L	N	U	T	T	I	D	A	O	I	E
S	A	M	L	L	P	O	H	S	L	T	H	A	G	C	R	O	N	A
W	E	B	I	E	U	C	A	A	I	Y	I	V	L	T	T	A	E	R
I	T	O	S	U	N	T	R	L	F	O	E	R	L	O	R	N	A	N
S	N	S	T	U	I	I	P	R	D	M	T	E	U	I	A	T	O	L
E	P	R	P	E	U	S	T	C	S	T	S	S	I	D	N	I	H	E
C	V	G	N	C	E	L	R	U	E	U	C	B	E	A	S	C	T	I
R	A	S	T	D	K	O	E	N	O	F	O	O	P	S	T	S	A	W
A	L	O	I	D	U	B	M	I	Y	R	S	D	E	E	O	S	P	A
C	C	S	M	S	A	C	R	A	S	O	A	R	K	T	U	C	R	Y
K	C	I	T	S	P	A	L	S	N	E	P	S	T	O	R	Y	O	D
H	E	T	S	A	L	P	R	E	D	M	O	G	I	D	H	I	C	J
E	P	T	I	I	E	T	R	F	I	O	P	T	A	C	L	U	N	D
E	C	S	H	S	O	N	E	L	I	N	E	R	M	E	I	G	L	Y
L	G	N	R	T	I	E	A	E	N	C	N	T	B	N	S	O	N	A
K	R	O	E	L	K	C	I	T	A	C	M	E	O	A	T	L	S	L
C	H	O	O	I	Y	C	U	F	D	E	I	S	T	A	N	D	U	P
U	O	P	T	T	D	A	H	R	E	L	K	C	E	H	N	R	I	D
H	O	C	S	R	S	U	E	E	N	T	E	R	T	A	I	N	E	R
C	T	I	N	V	O	L	A	P	P	L	A	U	S	E	A	I	G	O
T	D	S	A	R	E	M	U	N	A	E	F	C	B	R	T	E	A	W

ACCENT
ANECDOTE
ANTICS
APPLAUSE
AUDIENCE
BAD LANGUAGE
CHORTLE
CHUCKLE
DEADPAN
DROLL
ENTERTAINER
FACETIOUS
HECKLER
HILARIOUS
HOOT
HORSEPLAY
IMPRESSION
JOCOSE
JOCULAR
OBSERVATION
ONE-LINER
OPEN MIKE
PUNCHLINE
RIOTOUS
ROAR
ROUTINE
SARCASM
SIDE-SPLITTING
SITCOM
SKETCH
SLAPSTICK
SPOOF
STAND-UP
STOOGE
STORY
TICKLE
WISECRACK
WORDPLAY

ued...

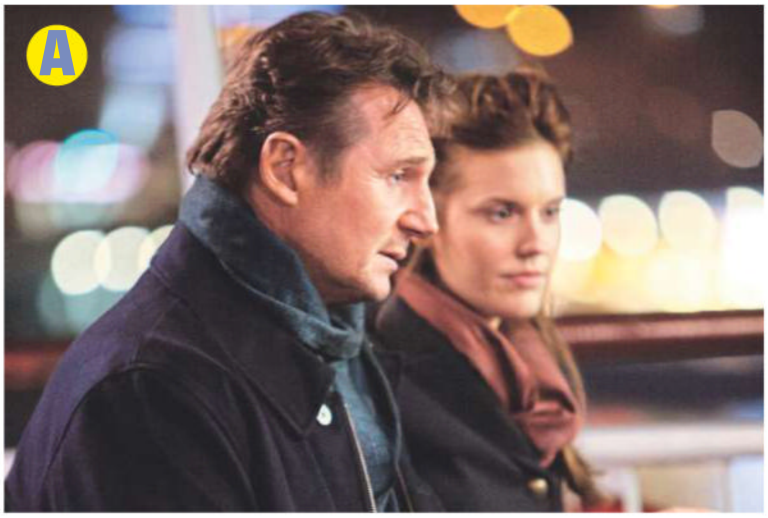
KILLER SUDOKU

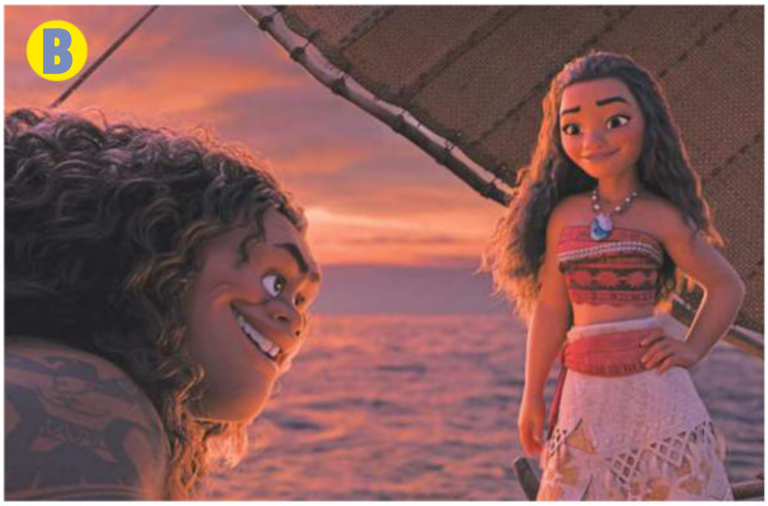
Killer Sudoku is based on the traditional sudoku grid and every column, every row and every 3x3 box must contain the digits 1 to 9. But there's a twist – the dotted squares must be filled with numbers that add up to that in the left corner.

7		14		14		14	2	1
14			7				17	
3	14		14	15	4	13	3	6
	6						5	7
8	14	9	16	5	6		9	
3					14		4	11
20	4	3	10		18			
	15		3	6	11	11		
		10				15		

GUESS THE MOVIE

Can you name these famous films from looking at just one scene?





Pictures Shutterstock

THIS WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

BITS & PIECES

	A		B		G	L	A	N	C	E	D
S	T	R	O	L	L		N		O		R
	T		T		A	N	G	E	R		I
C	A	C	T	U	S		E		G		F
	C		L		S	O	L	O	I	S	T
C	H	I	E	F		W		R		I	
		C		L		N	O	B	O	D	Y
A	V	E	R	A	G	E		I		E	
	A			K		D	E	T	A	C	H
B	R	E	W	E	D		X			A	
	I		E		I	M	P	L	O	R	E
D	E	S	I	G	N		E		W		
	T		G		G		L	I	L	A	C
T	Y	P	H	O	O	N		N		N	
O		A		V		O	R	C	H	I	D
P		S	W	E	E	T		O		M	
I		T		R		C	O	M	B	A	T
C	H	E	E	T	A	H		E		L	

GUESS THE CELEB

A Maura Higgins
B Jonathan Bailey

WHAT ON EARTH?

Grater

ROUND SUM

20

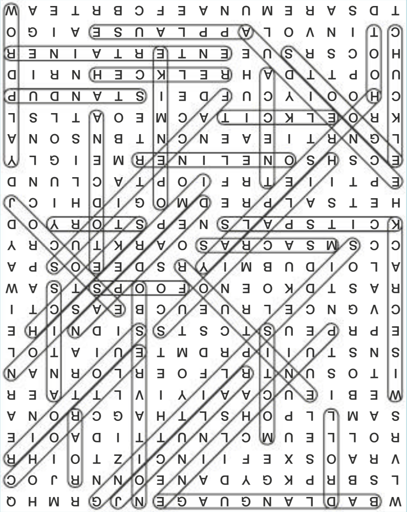
CODEBREAKER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
M	J	G	U	L	Q	V	C	T	O	Z	I	B
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
E	Y	F	S	X	K	D	H	A	R	P	W	N

	S		N		S	A	C		A		S		W	
S	Q	U	I	N	T		H	A	B	I	T	U	A	L
	U		B		O		A		B		Y		V	
F	E	Z		E	M	E	R	G	E	D		F	I	X
	A		P		P		M		Y		Q		N	
S	K	I	L	L						J	U	D	G	E
O			E								I			L
W	O	M	A	N						O	C	H	R	E
E			S								K			C
R	E	F	E	R						D	E	B	I	T
	X		D		E		L		D		R		R	
Z	I	P		A	N	T	I	Q	U	E		S	K	Y
	L		S		J		V		V		S		I	
D	E	T	H	R	O	N	E		E	X	P	A	N	D
	D		Y		Y		R	O	T		A		G	

Celebrity Noel Fielding **Fact** Sacked on his first day working in a cake shop.

WORDSEARCH



W	B	A	D	L	A	N	G	U	A	G	E	N	J	G	R	M	H	Q
L	S	B	R	P	K	G	Y	D	A	N	E	O	N	N	R	J	O	C
V	R	A	O	S	X	E	F	I	I	N	C	I	Z	T	O	I	H	R
R	O	L	L	E	U	M	C	L	N	U	T	T	I	D	A	O	I	E
S	A	M	L	L	P	O	H	S	L	T	H	A	G	C	R	O	N	A
W	E	B	I	E	U	C	A	A	I	Y	I	V	L	T	T	A	E	R
I	T	O	S	U	N	T	R	L	F	O	E	R	L	O	R	N	A	N
S	N	S	T	U	I	I	P	R	D	M	T	E	U	I	A	T	O	L
E	P	R	P	E	U	S	T	C	S	T	S	S	I	D	N	I	H	E
C	V	G	N	C	E	L	R	U	E	U	C	B	E	A	S	C	T	I
R	A	S	T	D	K	O	E	N	O	F	O	O	P	S	T	S	A	W
A	L	O	I	D	U	B	M	I	Y	R	S	D	E	E	O	S	P	A
C	C	S	M	S	A	C	R	A	S	O	A	R	K	T	U	C	R	Y
K	C	I	T	S	P	A	L	S	N	E	P	S	T	O	R	Y	O	D
H	E	T	S	A	L	P	R	E	D	M	O	G	I	D	H	I	C	J
E	P	T	I	I	E	T	R	F	I	O	P	T	A	C	L	U	N	D
E	C	S	H	S	O	N	E	L	I	N	E	R	M	E	I	G	L	Y
L	G	N	R	T	I	E	A	E	N	C	N	T	B	N	S	O	N	A
K	R	O	E	L	K	C	I	T	A	C	M	E	O	A	T	L	S	L
C	H	O	O	I	Y	C	U	F	D	E	I	S	T	A	N	D	U	P
U	O	P	T	T	D	A	H	R	E	L	K	C	E	H	N	R	I	D
H	O	C	S	R	S	U	E	E	N	T	E	R	T	A	I	N	E	R
C	T	I	N	V	O	L	A	P	P	L	A	U	S	E	A	I	G	O
T	D	S	A	R	E	M	U	N	A	E	F	C	B	R	T	E	A	W

KILLER SUDOKU

4	3	8	6	5	9	7	2	1
7	1	6	4	3	2	5	8	9
2	9	5	8	7	1	4	3	6
1	6	4	2	8	3	9	5	7
8	2	9	7	4	5	1	6	3
3	5	7	9	1	6	8	4	2
6	4	2	1	9	8	3	7	5
5	8	1	3	6	7	2	9	4
9	7	3	5	2	4	6	1	8

GUESS THE MOVIE

A Taken 2
B Moana

*NB for Prize Puzzles information, see page 53

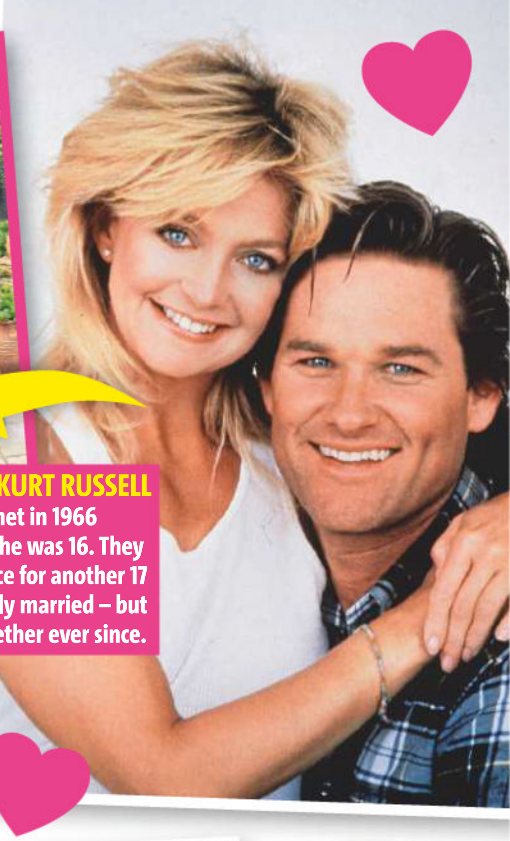
COUPLES THEN & NOW

These romances have defied the Hollywood odds

By Sarah O'Byrne. Pictures Alamy, Imago

TOM HANKS AND RITA WILSON

The stars first crossed paths on the set of *Bosom Buddies* in 1981 when Tom was still married to Samantha Lewes. They confirmed their relationship five years later and tied the knot in 1988.



GOLDIE HAWN AND KURT RUSSELL

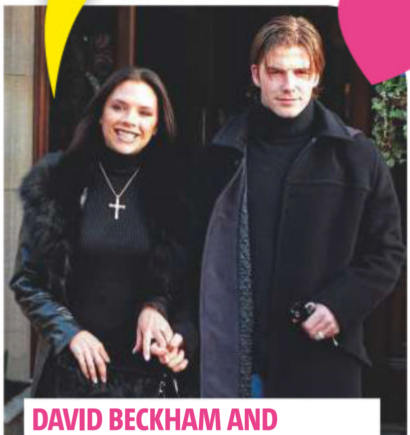
These long-time lovers met in 1966 when Goldie was 21 and he was 16. They didn't strike up a romance for another 17 years – and never actually married – but they've been happy together ever since.

MICHAEL DOUGLAS AND CATHERINE ZETA-JONES

When Michael saw Catherine in *The Mask of Zorro*, it was love at first sight. Despite the 25-year age gap – she's now 55 while he's 80 – the pair wed in 2000 and are parents to Dylan, 24 and Carys, 21.

SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR AND FREDDIE PRINZE JR

The *Buffy* star met her future husband on the set of the 1997 slasher film *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. Although they didn't hit it off straight away, they began dating in 2000 and tied the knot two years later. Now, Sarah, 47, and Freddie, 48, are parents to Charlotte, 14, and Rocky, 11.



DAVID BECKHAM AND VICTORIA BECKHAM

David, 49, and Victoria, 50, met in 1997 when she was a global popstar and he was playing for England. Now, she runs a fashion empire while David co-owns Inter Miami CF, and they share Brooklyn, 25, Romeo, 22, Cruz, 19 and Harper, 13.

OPRAH WINFREY AND STEDMAN GRAHAM

In true Oprah fashion, she first set eyes on Stedman, 73, at a charity event back in 1986. Although they got engaged in 1992, Oprah, 70, realised she didn't want a marriage – but the couple have gone the distance.

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slimmi
Shame game
Top tip
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Diet before
Diet now
Child's play

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